Kalaw Lagaw Ya

Kalau Lagau Ya, **Kalaw Lagaw Ya**, **Kala Lagaw Ya** ([kala(u) laɡau ja]), or the **Western Torres Strait language** (also several other names, see below), is the language indigenous to the central and western Torres Strait Islands, Queensland, Australia. On some islands, it has now largely been replaced by Torres Strait Creole.

Before colonisation in the 1870s–1880s, the language was the major lingua franca of the area in both Australia and Papua New Guinea, and is fairly widely spoken by neighbouring Papuans and by some Aboriginal people. How many non-first language speakers it has is unknown. It also has a 'light' (simplified/foreigner) form, as well as a pidginised form. The simplified form is fairly prevalent on Badu and neighbouring Moa.

Kalau Lagau Ya	
Western Torres Strait	
Mabuiag	
Region	Western and Central Torres Strait Islands, Queensland
Ethnicity	Badu Island, Mabuiag, Kaurareg, Mualgal, Saibai Island, Boigu, Dauan Island, Kulkalgal, Maluigal (Torres Strait Islanders)
Native speakers	957 (2016 census)[1]
Language family	Pama–Nyungan • **Kalau Lagau Ya**
Dialects	Kalau Lagau Ya, alt. Kalaw Lagaw Ya Kalau Kawau Ya, alt. Kalaw Kawaw Ya Kulkalgau Ya Kaiwaligau Ya
Signed forms	Western Torres Strait Islander Sign Language
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	mwp
Glottolog	kala1377 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kala1377)[2]
AIATSIS[3]	Y1 (https://collection.aiatsis.gov.au/austlang/language/Y1)
Linguasphere	29-RG(A-a)

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Range of Kalau Lagau Ya (orange) in the Torres Strait

Names

The language is known by several names besides *Kalaw Lagaw Ya*, most of which (including Kalaw Lagaw Ya) are names of dialects, spelling variants, dialect variants and the like — and include translations of the English terms, *Western Island Language* and *Central Island Language*:

- Kalaw Lagaw Ya/Kalau Lagau Ya/Kala Lagaw Ya, Kalaw Kawaw Ya/Kalau Kawau Ya, Kala Lagaw Langgus/Kala Lagau Langgus/Kalaw Lagaw Langgus/Kalau Lagau Langgus (*Western Island Language*)
- Lagaw Ya/Lagau Ya (*Home Island Language*)
- Langgus, Linggo (*Language*, *Lingo*)
- Kaywalgaw Ya/Kaiwaligau Ya/Kawalgaw Ya [*Islanders' Language*],
- Kowrareg (Kaurareg)
- Kulkalgau Ya (*Blood-Peoples' Language*); Kulka 'blood' was an important Central Islands cult figure, and brother to Malo-Bumai of Mer.
- Mabuiag (the name of one of the islands where it is spoken)
- Westen or West Torres or Western Torres Strait
- Dhadhalagau Ya (*Mid-Island*/*Central Island Language*)
- Sentrel or Central Islands.

One term used by Eastern Islanders and neighbouring Papuans for Kala Lagaw Ya is *Yagar Yagar*, from the word *yagar* (*yá* 'speech, etc.' + *gár* 'sympathy clitic' ('dear', 'please', etc.), often used by Western and Central Islanders in speech to show a sympathetic or nostalgic frame of mind.

In literature on the language the abbreviations KLY (Kalaw Lagaw Ya), KKY (Kalau Kawau Ya), KulY (Kulkalgau Ya), MY (Muwalgau Ya) and KY (Kaiwaligau Ya) are often used as abbreviations. The name *Mabuiag* /mabujaɡ/, in English pronounced /ˈmoʊbiæɡ/, is fairly widespread as a name for the language, this having been established by the Cambridge Expedition to Torres Strait, whose main research on the language was with Mabuiag material. Though the preferred term in English in Academia for some time was *Kala Lagaw Ya*,[4] according to Ober (2007), the form was always regarded as "colloquial" by native speakers. In a High Court decision on 7 August 2013, the decision was taken to officially term the language *Kalau Lagau Ya*, using the formal form.

When speaking to each other, speakers generally refer to the language as *Langgus* 'language' or use phrases such as KLY/KulY *ngalpudh muli*, MY-KY *ngalpudh/ngalpadh muli*, KKY *ngalpadh muliz* "speak(s) our language", e.g. KLY/KulY *ngalpudh muuli, thanamunungu tidailai!*, MY-KY *ngalpudh/ngalpadh muuli, thanamuningu tidailai!*, KKY *ngalpadh muli, thanamulngu tidaile!* 'Speak in our language so they don't understand!'. *Ngalpudh/ngalpadh* literally means 'like us'. The construction *X-dh mula+i-* 'speak X-like' is used to refer to speaking in a language, e.g. KKY *markaidh muliz* 'speak [in] English', *zapanisadh muliz* 'speak [in] Japanese', *dhaudhalgadh muliz* 'speak [in] Papuan', *mæyamadh muliz* 'speak [in] Meriam Mìr', *thanamudh muliz* 'speak like them, speak [in] their language'. It is otherwise common for speakers to use nominal phrases like KLY/KulY *ngalpun ya*, MY-KY *ngalpun/ngalpan ya*, KKY *ngalpan ya* 'our language' to refer to the language when speaking to each other.

Geographic distribution

Kalau Lagau Ya is spoken on the western and central islands of Torres Strait, between Papua New Guinea (*Naigay Dœgam Dhaudhai* "North-side Mainland/Continent", also called *Mœgi Dhaudhai* "Small Mainland/Continent", KKY *Mœgina Dhaudhai*) and the Australian mainland (*Zey Dœgam Dhaudhai* "South-side Mainland/Continent", also known as *Kœi Dhaudhai* "Big Mainland/Continent"), though on some islands it has now been largely replaced by Brokan (Torres Strait Creole).

Before Colonisation in the 1870s–1880s, the language was the major lingua franca of the area in both Australia and Papua, and there is some folk history evidence that the language was spoken as a first language in a few villages neighbouring Torres Strait in Papua. It was also formerly spoken by the Hiámo (Hiámu, Hiáma) of Daru (Dhaaru) to the north-east of Torres Strait, who were originally settlers from Yama [Yam Island] in Torres Strait, Hiámu/Hiámo/Hiáma being a Kiwai pronunciation of Yama. The main body of the Hiámo moved to the Thursday Island group to escape the Kiwai colonisation of Daru some centuries ago.

Classification and external comparison

The language is classified as being part of the Pama–Nyungan languages. Mitchell (1995) and Mitchell (2015) regard it as a mixed language with an Australian core (Pama–Nyungan) and Papuan and Austronesian overlays, while Capell (1956) and Dixon (2002) classify it among the Papuan languages. The personal pronouns are typically Australian, most kin terms are Papuan, and significant sea/canoe and agricultural vocabulary is Austronesian.

Map of the Torres Strait Islands.

Kalaw Lagaw Ya has only 6% cognation with its closest Australian neighbour, Urradhi, with a further 5% 'common' vocabulary (loans of various origins) — and about 40% common vocabulary with its Papuan neighbour, Meriam Mìr.[5] Of the 279 Proto-Paman forms given in Sommer (1969, pp. 62–66), only 18.9% have definite realisations in Kalaw Lagaw Ya, with a further 2.5% which may be present. One word that illustrates the problems of 'may-be' relationship is *kùlbai* (KKY *kùlba*) 'old', which may be a metathetic realisation of CA *bulgan* 'big; old'. Potentially 80% of the vocabulary of the language is non-Australian, and includes Papuan and Austronesian items.[6] Bouckaert, Bowern and Atkinson (2018) found that Kalaw Lagaw Ya had the highest number of 'unique' (that is, otherwise unshared) forms of any Australian language in their sample.[7]

Australian (Common Australian)	Papuan (Proto–East Trans-Fly)	Austronesian (Proto–Central District)
*nya-ga 'look' *nagai-/nage-/nagi-* id.	*omài 'dog' *ùmai* id.	*gamo 'belly' *gamu* 'body'
*jana 'they' *thana* id.	*p[ae]- 'that, there' *pi-/pe-* 'specifically yonder'	*waura 'south-east' *wœur(a)* id.
*ganyarra 'reptile' *kœnara* 'k.o. tree snake'	*gabo 'cold' *gabu* id.	*boro-ma 'pig' *bùrùm(a)* id.
*galga 'spear' *kœlak(a)* id.	*biro 'side' *bero* 'rib; side of boat, hillside, river bank, etc.'	*pu[lr]i 'magic' *puy(i)* (older *puři*) 'magic, plant'

Oral tradition and cultural evidence recorded by Haddon (1935) and Laade (1968), backed by archaeological evidence[8] and linguistic evidence, shows that Austronesian trade and settlement in South-West Papua, Torres Strait and Cape York occurred; the languages have significant Austronesian vocabulary content,[9] including items such as the following:

Kalaw Lagaw Ya	meaning	Meriam Mìr	meaning	Bine (Papua)	meaning	Proto-Oceanic Austronesian	meaning
maapu	heavy	(beberbeber)	id.	*mæpu*	id.	*mapa	id.
paad(a)	hill	*paser*	id.	*podo*	id.	*pantar	id.
Wœy(i) OKY *Wœrĭ*	Venus	*wer*	star	*wale*	star	*waRi	sun
wœiwi	mango	*waiwi*	id.	*wiwi*	id.	*waiwai	id.
waaku	mat; sail	*papék*	id.	*waaku*	id. (Kalaw Lagaw Ya loan)	*paqu	id.
waaru	turtle	(*nam*)	id.	*waaru*	id. (Kalaw Lagaw Ya loan)	*ponu	id.

Some of the Austronesian content is clearly South-East Papuan Austronesian:

word	Kalaw Lagaw Ya	Gudang (Australia)	Kiwai (Papua)	Motu (Central District, Papua)	Proto–SE Papuan	Proto-Oceanic
nacre, mother-of-pearl	maay(i) (OKY maaři)	maari	mari	mairi	*mairi	?
outrigger	sayim(a) OKY sařima	charima	sarima SE Kiwai harima	darima	*nsarima	*saRaman
pig	bùrùm(a)	—	boroma	boroma	*boro-ma	*mporok
rope, cord	wœru KKY wœrukam(i)	uuru	waro	varo	*waro	*waro
magic, plant	puuyi OKY puři	upirri 'magic'	—	hui (< *fui) 'magic'	*pu[rl]i	*(m)puluŋ 'magic'

The linguistic history of the Torres Strait area is complex, and interaction of well over 2500 years has led to many layers of relationship between the local languages, including many words that are obviously common, such as the following 'trade' words in Torres Strait area languages.

Kalaw Lagaw Ya	Meriam Mìr	Kiwai (Papua)	Agöb (Papua)	Gudang (Australia)	Urradhi (Australia)	Anguthimri (Australia)	Mpakwithi (Australia)
gii *tusk, knife, tusk/knife-life formation*	gir *tusk/knife-life formation*	giri *tusk, knife, tusk/knife-life formation*	?	?	kiri/ghiri *knife*	kiri *knife*	kiri *knife*
sœguba *tobacco*	sogob *tobacco*	suguba *tobacco*	?	__[a]	tyughubha *tobacco*	tyughubhu *tobacco*	?
yœuth(a) *long house, hall; church*	ìut (alt- eut) *church*	—	?	?	yutha *house*	—	—
mœruka *any strange four-legged animal*	—	—	?	?	murruku *horse*	?	marruku *horse*
mœrap(i) *bamboo*	marep	marabo	?	marrapi	marrapi	?	marrapi
eso *thanks*	esoau	?	eso	?	?	?	?
paaudh(a) *peace*	paud	?	piuda	paaudha	?	?	?
warup(a) *drum*	warup	warupa	(w)arapa	warrupa	(w)arrupa	(w)arrupa	(w)arrupa
thuurik(a) *cutting tool*	tulik	turika	turika *Bine* turi/turikæ	?	thurriya *crowbar*	thurriya *crowbar*	thurriya *crowbar*

a. The only Gudang word recorded in the mid-1800s by Europeans was *choki*, from the Malay-based English Pidgin English used by the British (and other) sailors of the time. The Malay word is variously *coki* or *cuki*.

However, the question of external relationships of Kalaw Lagaw Ya is also complicated by resemblances between both the Paman (Pama-Nyungan, Australian languages) and the Trans-Fly (Papuan) languages. Though few, these may be significant, and include forms such as those noted below, not all of which appear in Kalaw Lagaw Ya. Such resemblances could point to a deep-level relationship dating back to before the flooding of Torres Strait at the end of the last age, as claimed by Mitchell[10] ,[5] or they could point to genetic inheritance and subsequent language contact, as discussed by Alper, Bowern, and O'Grady 2009.[11]

Proto-Paman (or a specific North Cape York language)	meaning	Proto-Trans-Fly	meaning	Kalaw Lagaw Ya	meaning
*kaalu	*ear*	*Vtkuru	*hear*	kaura; kùrusai- (compounds only)	*ear*
*ŋaa(na)	*who*	*ŋana	id.	ngaa	id.
*mini	*good*	*mi:nji	id.	miina	*real, true, very*
anha Urradhi, Gudang	*breath*	*ŋana	id.	ngœna	id.
wintamwintama Urradhi	*star*	*mpintom	id.	(thithuy(i) OKY thithuri)	id.
*nyupun	*one*	*[ni/yi/dVr]ponV	id.	wœrapùn(i) ùrapùn (wara 'one of a group')	id.
*pama	*man, person*	*pyama	id.	(mabaig *lit.* 'walker')	id.

Personal pronouns

A comparison of the Kalaw Lagaw Ya, Meriam Mìr, Kiwai and Uradhi personal pronouns show similarities and differences in typology. In comparison to Uradhi, Kalaw Lagaw Ya has an archaic typology — or, rather, Uradhi has innovated, having lost the Common Australian 1, 2 and 3 plurals. Kiwai does not have 1–2 pronouns, while Meriam Mìr does not have a dual and trial/paucal set of pronouns which correspond to its verb system. The Kalaw Lagaw Ya system, like that of Uradhi, is Australian:

Kalaw Lagaw Ya (KKY dialect)

number	1	1–2	2	3
singular	ngai	—	ngi	nui MASC na FEM
dual	ngalbe	ngœba	ngipel	palai
plural	ngœi	ngalpa	ngitha	thana

Meriam Mìr

number	1	1–2	2	3
singular	ka	—	ma	e
non-singular	ki	mi	wa	wi, i

Note that except for Meriam Mìr, the Trans Fly languages also have two-gender masculine-feminine systems, though not marked on the pronouns themselves.[12]

Kiwai

number	1	2	3
singular	mai	rai	nowai
dual	nimoto	rigoto	neito
trial	nimoibi	rigoibi	neibi
plural	nimo	rigo	nei

Urradhi

number	1	1–2	2	3
singular	ayu(va)	—	antu(va)	ulu(va)
dual	ampu(la)	ali(va)	ipu(la)	ula(va)
plural	(same as dual)	ana(va)	(same as dual)	(same as dual)

However, even though the system has no real surprises for Australian linguistics, it is clear that Kalaw Lagaw Ya has innovated in the 1st and 2nd pronouns, which have the following CA origins:

- CA *ngali 'we, inclusive' > *ngœy* [stem: *ngœlmu-* (old style singing *ngalimu-, ngalemu-*), *ngœimu-*] 'we, exclusive'; and with stem extensions *ngalpa* 'you and I/we' (old-style singing *ngalipa/ngalepa*), *ngalbai/ngalbe* 'we DUAL (exclusive)', (old style singing *ngalebai/ngalibai*)
- CA *ngana+pulV 'we, exclusive dual' > *ngœba* 'you and I'.

The 2nd person dual and plural pronouns are based on forms that literally mean 'you DUAL' (*ngipel*) and 'you-they' (*ngitha[na]*), in much the same way as the demonstratives mark the dual and plural (see further below in Nominal Morphology).

The Kalaw Lagaw Ya pronouns and their Australian origins

English	KLY	KulY	KY	KKY	Old KY (Kowrareg)	Proto-Pama–Nyungan origin
I	ngay stem: nga-	ngai stem: nga-	ngai stem: nga-	ngai stem: nga-	ngai stem: nga-	*ngayi
you and I	ngœba	ngœba	ngœba	ngœba	ngœba	*ngana+pulV 'we DUAL, exclusive'
we DUAL (exclusive)[a]	ngalbay	ngalbai	ngalbai/ngalbe	ngalbe	ngalbai/ngalbe	*ngali+[?] 'you and me, you and us'
we (inclusive)[a]	ngalpa stem: ngalpu-	ngalpa stem: ngalpu-	ngalpa stem: ngalpu-	ngalpa stem: ngalpa-	ngalpa stem: ngalpa-	*ngali+[?] 'we inclusive'
we (exclusive)[a]	ngœy stem: ngœlmu-	ngœi stem: ngœlmu-	ngœyi stem: ngœymu-	ngœi stem: ngœimu-	ngœři stem: ngœři(mu)-	*ngali 'we inclusive'
you SING	ni	ni	ngi/ni	ngi	ngi	*NHiin
you DUAL	nipel stem: nipe-	nipel stem: nipe-	ngipel stem: ngipe-	ngipel/nipel stem: ngipe-/nipe-	ngipel stem: ngipe-	*NHiin+pulV 'you dual'
you PL	nitha stem: nithamu-	nitha stem: nithamu-	ngitha stem: ngithamu-	ngitha/nitha stem: ngithamu-/nithamu-	ngithana stem: ngithana(mu)-	*NHiin + *DHana 'they plural'
he	nuy stem: nu-	nui stem: nu-	nui stem: nu-	nui stem: nu-	nui stem: nu-	*NHu-
she	na	na	na	na	na	*NHaan
they DUAL	palay stem: palamu-	palai stem: palamu-	pale stem: palamu-	palai stem: palamu-, Boigu pale stem: palemu-	pale stem: palamu-	*pula 'they dual, two'
they	thana stem: thanamu-	thana stem: thanamu-	thana stem: thanamu-	thana stem: thanamu-	thana stem: thanamu-	*DHana 'they plural'
who	nga	nga	nga	nga	nga	*ngaaNH
what [b]	mi-, midha- (midhi-)	mi-	mi-	mi-	mi-	*miNHa 'food; what'

a. Exclusive does not include the second person, i.e. 'you', while inclusive does.

b. There is no independent nominative-accusative form for this pronoun.

Pre-historic overview

An examination of the various sub-systems (vocabulary, syntax, morphology) suggests the following:

Australian (Paman)

Some basic and abstract vocabulary, all personal pronouns (inc. *who* and *what/which*), some verbs. Some grammar, such as nominal and verb morphology (subject, agent, object, genitive, **-l** locative, **-ka** dative, perfective attainative, imperfective, **-i/-iz(i)** perfective active. These typological categories also exist in the Trans-Fly languages; the forms in Kalaw Lagaw Ya are clearly Australian.

Papuan (Trans-Fly)

Some basic and abstract vocabulary, some verbs. Some grammar, such as verb number and different stems for different number forms of some verbs. Use of state/movement verbs as existential and stative 'be' verbs. Two non-personal pronominals: *naag/naga* 'how', *namuith* 'when' (both in KKY, the dialect of the islands off the Papuan coast).

Austronesian

Some basic vocabulary, terminology dealing with agriculture, canoes, the weather, the sky and the sea, some abstract nouns, some verbs. Possibly some grammar in the form of function words, such as *waadh* (KKY *waaza*) 'existential emphasis' (i.e. 'it is true that ... '), Proto Oceanic Austronesian *waDa 'existential'.

The Australian word forms and structure found in Kalaw Lagaw Ya appear to be retentions, i.e. inherited; the original Australian forms appear to be unchanged at the core level. This suggests that the language is not a pidgin/creole in origin, but an Australian language which has undergone strong external lexical and grammatical influence. The language appears to be a classic case of shift,[13] whereby speakers of one language retained multilingualism over a long period of time, absorbing aspects of another language. The Austronesian and Papuan overlays modified the Australian phonology and syntax profoundly. The contrast of Australian laminal *nh/ny* and *lh/ly* and apical *n* and *l* has been lost, voicing has become phonemic and *s, z, t, d, o* and *òò* have developed. This also affected the phonology of Australian vocabulary, where these 'foreign' sounds also occur.

The non-Australian content appears to be mainly lexicon (including verbs), particularly dealing with the sea, farming, canoe and sky/weather/astrology, with possible some syntactic words. This presents a picture[13] of a typically extensive borrowing situation with much lexical borrowing and some structural borrowing with a large amount of passive bilingualism and little active bilingualism.

Laade's picture (1968) of Australian and Papuan settlement in Torres Strait supports the above scenario of Papuan and Austronesian speakers who shifted to an Australian language over a long period of time, the Austronesians being culturally a superstratum, however not in a position to impose their language. He presented folk history evidence that a few Austronesian traders (men) settled at Parema (north-east of Daru) and married local [Proto–Trans Fly speaking] women. To avoid further miscegenation, they soon moved and settled in Torres Strait, first to the Eastern Islands, then to the Central Islands, then to Moa, Badu and Mabuiag. At Mabuiag, Badu and Moa they found Aboriginal people, killed the men and kept the women (and presumably the children). Some moved on up to Saibai, Dœwan and Bœigu to avoid this new miscegenation, hence the lighter colour of many Saibai, Dœwan and Bœigu people. Bœigu folk history collected by Laade also shows direct East Austronesian genetic influence on Bœigu.[14]

The social context was that of a few Austronesian men who settled on the outskirts of an East Trans-Fly group, intermarried, and whose children were either bilingual, or speakers of their mothers' language, with some knowledge of their fathers' language. The local people did not need to speak the traders' language, who in turn had to speak the local language. The children in turn would then speak the local language, with varying ability in the fathers' language, particularly in areas that were culturally important for the fathers.

These people then shifted to Torres Strait — maintaining established ties with Papua as well as with Austronesian speakers further east (this latter being suggested by various characteristics of the Austronesian content in Kalau Lagaw Ya) — and overlaid an Australian population in such a way that the majority of women spoke an Australian language, with a significant number, mainly men, who spoke a South-East Papuan Austronesian language, accompanied by their Papuan wives and their perhaps bilingual children. Over time, the core structure of the local mothers' language dominated, with retention of the newcomers' Papuo-Austronesian content in the appropriate cultural subsystems. In essence this would have been a 'replay' of the original settlement by Austronesian traders at Parema, with the women understanding the language of the men, but not really needing to speak it while retaining parts of their language for significant areas. The children then created a new language shift to an Australian language with a Papuan-Austronesian admixture.

Kalaw Lagaw Ya is thus a mixed language in that a significant part of its lexicon, phonology and grammar is not Australian in origin. The core nominal, pronominal and verb morphology is Australian in both form and grammar — though a certain amount of the grammar is common to Trans-Fly and Paman languages in the first place. Some semantic categories, verb number morphology, and some other morphology are non-Australian in origin. Potentially 80% of its vocabulary is non-Australian. The interplay of the above within the subsystems of Kalaw Lagaw Ya lexicon, phonology and grammar points more to mixing through shift and borrowing rather than pidginisation and creolisation.

Outside influences

The language also has some vocabulary from languages outside the Torres Strait area, from the Indonesian, Malay, Philippine, English and other 'outsiders'. Where loan words from the Western Austronesian (Indonesian, etc.) loans are concerned, it is possible that some such came into the language in pre-European contact days, with the Makassans and similar fishermen/traders who visited northern Australia and Torres Strait.

Examples of post-European contact Western Austronesian loan words:

word	Kalaw Lagaw Ya	origin
coconut toddy	*thúba*	tuba (Eastern Indonesian or Philippine language)
trumps (in cards)	*záru*	zaru/jaru (Eastern Indonesian or Philippine language)
mate, friend, brother	*bala* Boigu variants: *bœra, baya*	bela/bala (Eastern Indonesian or Philippine language)
blachan	*bœlasan*	Malay: belacan

Some words in the language, assuming that they are Western Austronesian loans, appear to be pre-contact words. This is suggested by form and use in the language and in neighbouring languages (some of these words may ultimately be from Arabic and Sanskrit).[15]

Kalaw Lagaw Ya	meaning	possible source	meaning
aya (KKY) *aye* (KLY,KulY,KY)	come! (singular)	Malay: *ayo*	come!
bayu (KulY,KY) *baaiwa* (KLY)	waterspout	Malay: *bayu* (Sanskrit: वायु, romanized: *vāyú*)	wind
ádhi	- huge, great (also as an honorific) - story (with cultural, religious or similar significance) 'story stone or rock', i.e. a rock or stone that represents someone or something with sacred or cultural aignificance	Malay: *adi* (Sanskrit: अधि, romanized: *adhi*)	huge, great (also as an honorific)
kœdal(a)	crocodile	Malay: *kadal* Makassarese: *kaḍalaq*	lizard
pawa	deed, action, custom	Malay: *paal* [paʔal] (Arabic: فَعَلَ, romanized: *fa ʿala*)	deed, action

In the KKY dialect of Kalaw Lagaw Ya, 'waterspout' is *markai gùb(a)* 'spirit wind'; waterspouts were one of the weapons of the *markai* who mainly came from the west/north-west (i.e. from what is now Indonesia) in the NW monsoon season (when waterspouts are common), and went back to the west/north-west with the SE trades.

Loans from modern Eastern Austronesian (Polynesian and Melanesian) into the language are mainly of religious or 'academic' use. In general, such words are terms for objects that are strictly speaking European goods. One exception is the last in the following table, which is commonly used instead of the traditional words *imi* 'spouse's opposite-sex sibling', 'opposite sex sibling's spouse' and *ngaubath* 'spouse's same-sex sibling', 'same-sex sibling's spouse'. These have also similarly been replaced in common usage by the English loan *woman* (pronounced [woman]) in the meaning of 'sister/daughter-in-law'.

Kalaw Lagaw Ya	meaning	source	meaning in originating language
thúsi	book, document, letter, etc.	Samoan: *tusi*	(same meaning)
laulau	table	Samoan: *laulau*	plaited coconut leaf used as a tray
wakasu	anointment oil	Drehu: *wakacu*	coconut oil
thawiyan (emotive form *thawi*)	brother/son-in-law	Vanuatu: *tawean*	brother-in-law

Other biblical loans are from Ancient Greek, Latin and Biblical Hebrew:

Kalaw Lagaw Ya	meaning	source	meaning in originating language
basalaya	kingdom	Ancient Greek: *βασιλείᾱ*	id.
aretho	holy communion	Ancient Greek: *ἄρτος*	wheaten bread
Sathana	Satan	Biblical Hebrew: שטן	Satan, opponent, adversary
Sabadh(a), *Sabadhi*	Sunday	Biblical Hebrew: שבת	Saturday (Sabbath)

Two early English loans of interest show back formation from what in the language appeared to be a plural. Most nouns (a) form the plural with an -*l* suffix, and (b) in the nominative-accusative singular elide the stem final vowel, thus *tukuyapa-* 'same-sex sibling', plural *tukuyapal*, nominative-accusative *tukuyap*. Under this model 'custard-apple' became *katitap*, plural *katitapal*, and 'mammy-apple' (pawpaw/papaya) became *mamiyap*, plural *mamiyapal*.

Dialects

There are four main dialects, two of which are on probably the verge of extinction, one (Kaiwaligau Ya) through convergence to the neighbouring Kalaw Lagaw Ya. Within the dialects there are two or more subdialects. The average mutual intelligibility rate, based on a Swadesh count, is around 97%.

- Northern dialect: Kalau Kawau Ya (Kalaw Kawaw Ya) — Saibai (Saibai Village and Aith, also Bamaga/Seisia on Cape York), Dœwan (Dauan), Bœigu (Boigu);
- Western dialect: Kalau Lagau Ya (Kalaw Lagaw Ya) — Mabuyag (Mabuiag) and Badhu (Badu). The western dialect also has a simplified form, particularly on Badhu, where quite a few foreign men of Malay and South Sea Islander origin settled with their Island wives in the late 1800s and early 1900s;
- Eastern dialect (Central Island dialect, spoken by the Kulkulgal nation[16]): Kulkalgau Ya — Masig, Yama, Waraber, Puruma, and associated islands, now uninhabited, such as Nagi, Tudu and Gebar;

- Southern dialect (South-West Islands): Kaiwaligau Ya [Kauraraigau Ya] — Muralag, Ngœrupai (alt. Ngurupai) and the other islands of the Thursday Island group, Mua (alt. Moa), Muri (Mt Adolphus — now uninhabited); Muwalgau Ya / Italgau Ya — Mua. Now converging with Kalaw Lagaw Ya.

The Southern dialect has certain characteristics that link it closely to the northern dialect, and folk history dealing with the Muralag group and Mua reflects this, in that the ancestors of the Kowrareg (the Hiámo) originally came from Dharu (Daru, to the north east of Torres Strait) — and who had previously settled on Dharu from Yama in Central Torres Strait.[17]

Samples of the dialects

They cut down a big tree earlier today to make a canoe.

> Kalau Kawau Ya: Thana kayb kœi puy pathanu gulpa aymœipa.
> Kalaw Lagaw Ya: Thana kayib kœi puuyi pathanu gulka ayimka.
> Kulkalgau Ya: Thana kayb kœi puy pathanu[l] gulka aymœika.
> Kaiwaligau Ya/Muwalgau Ya: Thana kayib kœi puy pathanu[l] gulpa aymaipa.
> Old Kaiwaligau Ya (Kowrareg): Thana kayiba kœi puuři pathanulai gulpa[ri] ayimařipa[ri].
> Simplified Kalaw Lagaw Ya: Thana kaib kœi puy pathai gulka aymaik.

Underlying form:

Thana+ ∅	kayiba ∅	kœi	puuRi+ ∅	patha+ ∅ + ∅ +nulai	gul+ka/pari	ayima+[R]i+ka/pari
They PL+NOM	today	big	tree+ACC	chop+ATT+SING+TODAY PST]	canoe+DAT	make+VN+DAT

Some isolect markers of the four dialects of Kalaw Lagaw Ya:

	Kalau Kawau Ya	Kaiwaligau Ya	Kalaw Lagaw Ya	Kulkalgau Ya	Kauraraigau Ya (Kowrareg)
YOU SING	ngi	ngi	ni	ni	ngi
house	laag	laag, mùdh	mùùdha	mùdh	laaga, mùdha
thunder	gigi	dhuyum	dhuyum	dhuyum	dhuyuma
end, finish	muasi- (B muyasi-)	muasi-	minasi-	minasi-	moasi-
heat	kom	kœmàn	kœmààna	kom	kœmàna
steam	kœman	kœmàn	kœmààna	kœmàn	kœmàna
Dative	-pa	-pa (-ka)	-ka (-pa)	-ka (-pa)	-pa, -pari (-ka)
Ablative	-ngu(z), -z(i)	-ngu, -z(i)	-ngu, -zi	-ngu, -z(i)	-nguzi, -zi
Present Perfective Active Singular	-iz, -izi, -izin	-i (Badhu -in), -izi (Badhu -izin)	-i, -izi	-i, -izi	-izi, -iziři

Dialectal differences

Phonology

Phonological differences between the dialects are rare, and in general sporadic. The only regular differences are the following:

Colloquial final unstressed vowel elision

Found in Kulkalgau Ya and Kaiwalgau Ya:

- *maalu* 'sea' > *maal'*
- *waapi* 'fish' > *waap'*
- *thathi* 'father' > *thath'*
- *waaru* 'turtle' > *waar'*
- *ngadha* 'appearance, looks' > *ngadh'*
- *mœràpi* 'bamboo' (*à* shows the stressed syllable) > *mœràp'*
- *bera* 'rib' > *ber'*
- *kaaba* 'dance performance, knot in bamboo (etc.)' > *kaab'*
- *kaba* 'oar, paddle' > '*kab'*

Such elision is rare or sporadic in Kalau Kawau Ya.

Final unstressed vowel devoicing

In Kalaw Lagaw Ya, such final vowels in correct language are devoiced, and deleted in colloquial language, except in a small class of words which include *bera* 'rib', where there is a short vowel in the stem and in which the final vowel is permanently deleted, with compensatory lengthening of the final consonant (thus *berr*).

Strictly speaking, the process is not final vowel devoicing, but rather stressed vowel lengthening accompanied by final vowel devoicing — except in the case of words such as *bera* 'rib' > *berr*, where the process is final consonant lengthening by the final vowel being 'incorporated' into the consonant. Note that in the following the word-final capital letter represents a devoiced vowel:

- *maalu* 'sea' > *maalU* > *maal'*
- *waapi* 'fish' > *waapI* > *waap'*
- *thaathi* 'father' > *thaathI* > *thaath'* (Badhu variant *thath'*)
- *waaru* 'turtle' > *waarU* > *waar'*
- *ngadha* 'appearance, looks' > *ngaadhA* > *ngaadh'*
- *mœràpi* 'bamboo' > *mœrààpI* > *mœrààp'*
- *bera* 'rib' > *berr*
- *kaba* 'dance performance, knot in bamboo (etc.)' > *kaabA* > *kaab*
- *kaba* 'oar, paddle' > *kabb*

In declined forms of such words, the long vowel is shortened, and the final vowel voiced, and in words like *ber* 'rib' the final vowel often reappears:

- *maalU* 'sea' + *-ka* 'dative' > *maluka*
- *waapI* 'fish' > *wapika*
- *thaathI* 'father' > *thathika*
- *waarU* 'turtle' > *waruka*
- *ngaadhA* 'appearance, looks' > *ngadhaka*
- *mœrààpI* 'bamboo' > *mœràpika*
- *ber* 'rib' > *beraka, berka*
- *kaabA* 'dance performance, knot in bamboo (etc.)' > *kabaka*
- *kab* 'oar, paddle' > *kabaka, kabka*

This vowel shortening in affixed/modified forms exists in all dialects, however the other dialects have retained contrastive length to some extent, whereas Kalaw Lagaw Ya has largely lost it for 'morphophonological' length, where the stressed vowel in non-emotive words (see below) of one or two syllables is automatically lengthened in the nominative-accusative; this also applies to words of three syllables with second syllable stress (as in *mœrààpI* 'bamboo').

One of the very few length contrasts in the Kalaw Lagaw Ya dialect is *kaaba* 'dance performance, knot in bamboo etc.' vs *kaba*, *kab* 'paddle, oar' (Old Kaiwaligau Ya [Kauraraigau Ya] *kœRaba*; *œRa* has regularly given short *a* in Kalaw Lagaw Ya in *kaba, kab*). Such length contrasts are more widespread in the other dialects.

The exceptions are (1) the small class or words that include *ber* 'rib' and *kab* 'oar, paddle', and (2) emotive words. Emotive words are those that equate to a certain extent to diminutives in languages such as Irish, Dutch and German, where specific suffixes are added to show 'diminutive' status (*-ín*, *-je* and *-chen*/*-el*/*-lein* respectively). Emotive words include familiar kinship terms [the equivalent of English *Mum*, *Dad* and the like] and words used in emotive contexts such as singing/poetry.

Word	Non-Emotive	Emotive
Mum	(apuuwa, apùù, àpu — *mother*)	Ama
Dad	(thaathi, thaath — *father*)	Baba
child	kaazi, kaaz	kazi
wife	iipi, iip	ipi
home (island)	laaga, laag	laga
dust, spray	pœœya, pœœy	pœya, paya
bamboo	mœràòpi, mœràòp	mœràpi, marapi
head	kuwìíku, kuwììk	kuwìku, kuiku

Final i-glide deletion

A small class of words in Kalau Kawau Ya do not have the final i-glide found in the other dialects, including the following:

- banana plant: KLY/KulY/KY *dawai*, KKY *dawa*
- spot, stain: KLY/KulY/KY *burkui* (*bœrkui*), KKY *bœrku* (*burku*)
- blank skink: KLY/KulY/KY *mogai*, KKY Saibai/Dœwan *mogo*, Bœigu *moga*
- old: KLY/KulY/KY *kulbai*, KKY *kulba*
- a short while, first before doing something else: KLY/KulY/KY *mamui*, KKY *mamu*
- birth cord: KLY/KulY/KY *kùpai*, KKY *kùpa*

Word forms in neighbouring languages as well in the Kauraraigau Ya (Kowrareg) of the mid-to-late 19th century, such as the Meriam Mìr *kopor* and Kauraraigau Ya *kupar*/*kopar* 'birth cord' show that in such words the final -*i*/Ø are the modern forms of older *ɾ*.

Syntax

The main syntactic differences are:

Verb negative construction

In all dialects except Kalau Kawau Ya, the verb negative is the nominalised privative form of the verbal noun. As this form in itself a noun, its subject and direct object are cast in the genitive:

- *Ngath waapi purthanu* 'I ate a fish'
- *Ngai stuwaka uzarima* 'I went to the store'
- *Ngau wapiu purthaiginga* 'I didn't eat a fish'
- *Ngau stuwaka uzaraiginga* 'I didn't go to the store'

The Kalau Kawau Ya dialect uses the verbal noun privative form as an invariable verb negative:

- *Ngath waapi purthanu* 'I ate a fish'
- *Ngai stuwapa uzarima* 'I went to the store'
- *Ngath waapi purthaiginga* 'I didn't eat a fish'
- *Ngai stuwapa uzaraiginga* 'I didn't go to the store'

Verb tenses/aspects

The Kalau Kawau Ya dialect has the tenses and aspects listed in the section on verb morphology. The other dialects have largely lost the remote future tense, using the habitual instead; the remote future in the other dialects is retained most commonly as a 'future imperative', where the imperative refers to a vague period in the future. The Kalaw Lagaw Ya dialect also has a 'last night' tense, where the adverb *bungil*/*bungel* (reduced form *bel*) 'last night' has become a verb postclitic, following the model of the adverb *ngùl* 'yesterday', which had previously become grammaticalised as a 'recent past' tense marker in all dialects, with reduction to -*ngu* in Kalau Kawau Ya. In the other dialects *bongel* 'last night' is a fully functioning temporal adverb used in conjunction with either the today past or the recent past.

The dialects differ in the forms of the following affixes:

1. present imperfective/near future perfective/verbal noun dative:

    KKY/KY **-pa**, KLY/KulY **-ka**

2. Recent past

    KKY **-ngu**, KLY/KY/KulY **-ngul**

3. Today past

    KKY/KLY/KulY **-nu**, KY **-nul** (older **-nulai**)

4. Habitual

    KKY **-paruig/paruidh/-parui/-paru/-pu** (**-pu** most commonly on stems of two or more syllables, and the bi-syllabic forms on stems of one syllable [the consonant final forms are emphatic forms])
    KLY/KulY **-kuruig**
    KY **-kurui**

Nominal affixes

The main nominal affix difference is the dative ending, which has the following forms in the various dialects:

- KLY/KulY **-ka**; **-pa** with *kipa* 'to here', *sipa* 'to there', *paipa* 'to ahead', *pawupa* 'to behind, off to one side'; **-pa** (sometimes in poetry/singing)
- KY **-pa**; **-ka** in *ngaikika* 'to/for/towards me'; **-ka** (often in poetry/singing)
- KKY **-pa** in all cases; **-ka** (often in poetry/singing)

The plural/HAVE suffix *-LAI* (underlying form) also shows a small amount of dialect variation with stems of two syllables, where Kulkalgau Ya differs from the other dialects in retaining the full form of the suffix *-lai*, reduced to *-l* in the other dialects. In stems of three or more syllables, the suffix is reduced to *-l* in all dialects, while retained as *-lai* (variants according to noun sub-class *-thai*, *-ai*, *-dai*) with stems of one syllable.

Three+ syllable stem

burum 'pig', stem: *buruma-*, plural *burumal*

Bisyllabic stem

lag, KLY *laaga* 'place, home, home island', stem: *laga-*, plural *lagal*, KulY *lagalai*

Monosyllabic stems

1. Regular vowel final: *ma* 'spider', plural *malai*
2. Regular -i glide final: *mui* 'fire', plural *muithai*, KLY *muithail*
3. Regular -l final: *pel* 'fish tail', plural *pelai*
4. Regular -r final: *wœr/wur/uur* 'water', plural *wœlai/wulai/ulai*, KKY *wœrai*
5. Irregular vowel final stem: *ya* 'speech, word(s), message, language, etc.', plural *yadai*, KLY *yadail*

Vocabulary

The main differences between the dialects are to do with vocabulary, as can be seen in the following examples:

- house/building: KLY *mùùdha* (*laaga*), KulY *mùdh* (*laag*), KY *laag* (*mùdh*), KKY *laag*
- mud: KLY/KulY/KY *berdhar* (*sœœya* 'sandy mud/silt'), KKY *sœœei* (*berdhar* 'softness of food, mud, etc.')
- grandad: KLY/KulY/KY *athe*, KKY *pòpu*
- frog: KLY/KulY *kœtube*, *kœtak*, *kaata*, KY *kat*, KLY (Saibai-Dœwan) *kat*, (Bœigu) *kœtuke*, *kat*
- axe: KLY/KulY/KY *aga*, KKY *agathurik* (*thurik* 'cutting tool')
- namesake: KLY/KulY *natham*, KKY/KY *nasem*
- small, little: KLY/KulY/KY *mœgi*, Saibai/Dœwan *mœgina*, Bœigu *mœgina, kœthuka*
- woman, female: KKY *yipkaz/yœpkaz* [stem *yipkazi-/yœpkazi-*], KLY/KulY *ipikaz* (KLY variant *iipka*) [stem *ipkazi-*], KY *ipkai/ipikai* [stem *ipkazi-/ipikazi-*]
- man, male: KKY *garkaz* [stem *garkazi-*], KLY/KulY *garka* [stem *garkazi-*], KY *garkai* [stem *garkazi-*]
- unmarried young/teenage woman: KKY *ngawakaz* [stem *ngawakazi-*], KLY/KulY *ngawka/ngoka* [stem *ngawkazi-/ngokazi-*], KY *ngawakaz* [stem *ngawakazi-*]
- song: KLY *naawu* (plural *nawul*), KulY *nawu* (plural *nawulai*), KY *nawu* (plural *nawul*), KKY *na* (plural *nathai*)
- moon, month: KLY *kisaayi*, poetry *mœlpal*, KulY/KY *kiisay*, poetry *mœlpal*, KKY *mœlpal*, poetry *kiisay*

Phonology

Consonants

Kala Lagaw Ya is the only Australian language to have the <u>alveolar</u> <u>fricatives</u> /s/ and /z/. However, these have <u>allophonic</u> variants /tʃ/ and /dʒ/, which are the norm in Australia languages (usually /c/ and /ɟ/ but non-contrasting). These latter two are allophones in that in all environments /s/ and /z/ can appear, while /tʃ/ and /dʒ/ can not appear at the end of a word; note that this allophony is very similar to that of the neighbouring Papuan language <u>Bine</u>. All the stops, except for the alveolars ⟨t⟩ and ⟨d⟩, have fricative allophones, thus ⟨p⟩ can be [p] or [ɸ], ⟨k⟩ can be [k] or [x], ⟨b⟩ [b] or [β], and so on. Furthermore, it is one of the few Australian languages with fully functioning voiced-voiceless distinctions (⟨p/b⟩, ⟨t/d⟩, ⟨s/z⟩, ⟨k/g⟩, ⟨th/dh⟩) — and one of the few without <u>retroflex</u> stops.

The language is also one of the few Australian languages with only one rhotic, one ⟨l⟩ and one ⟨n⟩. The earliest recorded dialect, Kaiwalgau Ya (Kauraraigau Ya [Kowrareg]), however, did have two rhotics, the tap and the glide; the rhotic glide has in general become /j/, /w/ or zero in the other dialects (and Modern Kaiwaligau Ya), rarely /r/. Neighbouring languages retain an /r/ in related words, such as:

- *sayima*, *sayim*, *sayma* 'outrigger' - Kauraraigau Ya *saʀima*, Kiwai (Papua) *harima*, Gudang (Australia) *charima*
- *babath* 'opposite-sex sibling' - Kauraraigau Ya *bœʀabatha* 'opposite-sex sibling', Meriam Mìr *berbet* 'sibling'
- *kupai*, KKY *kupa* 'birth cord' - Kauraraigau Ya *kupaʀ*, MM *kopor*

However, in singing, /s/, /z/ and /r/ are pronounced [s], [z], and [ɹ], and virtually never as [tʃ], [dʒ] and [r].

	Obstruent		Nasal	Approximant
	voiceless	**voiced**		
Labial	p̱ ⟨p⟩	ḇ ⟨b⟩	m̱ ⟨m⟩	w̱ ⟨w⟩
Dental	t̺ ⟨th⟩	d̺ ⟨dh⟩	n̺ ⟨n⟩	l̺ ⟨l⟩
Alveolar	t ⟨t⟩	d̲ ⟨d⟩	—	r ⟨r⟩
Alveo-palatal	s/tʃ ⟨s⟩	z/dʒ ⟨z⟩	—	j ⟨y⟩
Velar	k̲ ⟨k⟩	g̲ ⟨g⟩	ŋ ⟨ng⟩	—

Note:

1. The consonant /d/ varies to some extent with /r/, particularly in KKY/KY *kadai-/karai-*, KLY/KulY *kad[a]/kad[a]/kadai/karai* 'upwards'.

Vowels

	Unrounded		Rounded	
	short	**long**	**short**	**long**
Close	i̱ ⟨i⟩	i̱ː ⟨ii⟩	u̱ ⟨u⟩	u̱ː ⟨uu⟩
Close-mid	e̱ ⟨e⟩	e̱ː ⟨ee⟩	ʊ ⟨ù⟩	ʊː ⟨ùù⟩
Open-mid	ə ⟨œ⟩	ə̱ː ⟨œœ⟩	o̱ ⟨ò⟩	o̱ː ⟨òò⟩
Open	a̱ ⟨a⟩	a̱ː ⟨aa⟩	ɔ̱ ⟨o⟩	ɔ̱ː ⟨oo⟩

Notes:

1. The long vowel ⟨ùù⟩ is only found in Kala Lagaw Ya.
2. Length is to a certain extent contrastive, and partly allophonic.
3. The +/-round contrast is reminiscent of Papuan phonology.
4. The mid long vowels are allophonic variants of the mid short vowels that are in the process of developing phonemic status, while the short vowel ⟨ò⟩ is similarly in origin an allophone of ⟨òò⟩.

Internal reconstruction and comparison with neighbouring languages suggests an underlying four vowel structure with contrasting vowel length, where underlying *i* typically gives surface ⟨i⟩ and ⟨e⟩, underlying *a* typically gives surface *a* and *œ*, underlying *ò* typically gives surface ⟨o⟩ and ⟨ù⟩, and underlying *u* typically gives surface ⟨ù⟩ and ⟨u⟩ (there are other realisations as well, depending on rules of assimilation etc.):

Underlying Vowels	-round	+round
+high	*i,*ii	*u,*uu
-high	*a,*aa	*o,*oo

The language undergoes low-level vowel shifts, caused by stress domination within words and phrases. Long vowels are shortened, and short vowels raise when the word is preceded by morphemes such as adjectives, demonstrative articles, prefixes and the like; the changes also occur within words when these are suffixed:

- *laag* 'place' — *senabi lag* 'that place'
- *lagal* 'places' — *sethabi lœgal* 'those places' (also *sethabi lagal*)
- *mœrap* 'bamboo' — *mœrœpil* 'bamboo plants/poles/sticks' (also *mœrapil*)
- *guul* 'sailing canoe' — *senaubi gul* 'that canoe'
- *thonaral* 'times' — *sethabi thunaral* 'those times' (also *sethabi thonaral*)
- *zageth* 'work' — *zagithapa* 'to/for work [dative]' (also *zagethapa*) (compound of *za* 'thing' + *geth* 'hand')

The processes are low-level in that they are not 'automatic' — the changes do not have to occur and can be consciously 'blocked'. In normal speech, vowel shortening and the change of **a** to **œ** normally occur, while the changes of **e** to **i** and **o** to **u** are sporadic, and most common in unstressed syllables.

Assimilation of vowels to other vowels in the vicinity and consonants is also widespread, particularly of the vowel **œ**:

- *wœrab* 'coconut' — *wurab* — *urab*
- *yœlpai* 'lead' [verbal noun] — *yilpai* — *ilpai*
- *ngœnu* 'whose' — *ngunu*

- *kœu* 'belonging to here' — *kou*
- *ngœba* 'you and I' — *ngaba*

Kauřařaigau Ya phonology

The following summary of the phonology of Old Kauraregau Ya is compiled from MacGillivray (1852), Brierly (in Moore 1978), Ray and Haddon (1897) and Ray (1907). In general, there does not to appear to have been any great phonological difference between OKY and the modern dialects of Kalau Lagau Ya (apart from the retention of ř).

Stress

Stress appears to have been similar to that of the modern dialects, with stress patterns being most similar to that of modern Bœigu and Ngœrupai speech, the most conservative dialects in this respect. In the following the standardised forms are in **bold**.

Bisyllabic forms

Stress is initial:

- *baba, baba, bapa*: **baba** 'dad'
- *kawp*: **kaapu** 'seed'
- *buai, bua, bue, booi, boy, boi, booee, boye*: **buwai** 'clan; prow'

A few forms (such as *gru*: **gœrú** 'sugar cane') show that contrastive stress existed in bisyllabic words.

Multisyllabic forms

Stress is either on the initial or second syllable:

(1) initial:

- *gugure*: **gagaři** 'bow'
- *myrabada*: **ngœiřabatha** 'father's sister'
- *tukiapalli*: **tukuyapalai** 'same sex sibling PL'

(2) second:

- *bobata*: **bœbàtha** 'grandparent'
- *murrag:* **mœřààga** 'sweat'

Shifted stress also appears to have occurred as in the modern dialects:

- *purteipa*: **pùrthàipa** 'eat' (attainative imperfective present singular / perfective today future)
- *pratipa*: **pùràthipa** 'eat' (active imperfective present singular / perfective today future)

Vowels and diphthongs

These appear to have been the same as in the modern language. Vowel length in general appeared in the same environments as in KKY, though some amount of vowel lengthening under the KLY model is evident, as in *kawp*: **kaapu** 'seed', Kalau Kawau Ya / Kulkalgau Ya *kapu*, Kalau Lagau Ya *kaapu*.

The exact extent of retention of underlying vowel length and the development of variant forms is difficult to measure, as the spelling systems used by Brierly and MacGillivray did not always mark vowel length. Further, as they obtained words through elicitation (which has a common 'lengthening effect' on vowels when words are 'slowed down'), there are a few cases where they marked vowel length wrongly. Ray marked vowel shortness in stressed syllables.

The various sound changes that the vowels and diphthongs undergo in the modern language also occurred in OKY. One change that occurred much more than in the modern dialects was that of *ai* monophthongisation to *e*. The resulting *e* then often raised to *i* in open unstressed syllables.

No change:

- *alai*: **alai** 'husband', *amai*: **amai** 'earth oven'

Change:

- *buai, bua, bue, booi, boy, boi, booee, boye*: **buwai, buwe, buwi** 'clan, prow'

- *palai, pale*: **palai**, **pale** 'they DUAL'
- *kowraraiga*, *kowrarega*: **kauřařaiga~kauřařega** 'islander'
- *kowraraigali*, *kowraregale*, *kowrarigali*: **kauřařaigalai~kauřařegale~kauřařegali~kauřařigali** 'islanders'
- *wapi, wawpi'*: **waapi** 'fish': plural/proprietive *wapilai, wapile, wapili*

In the modern dialects, these forms are:

- clan, prow: **buwai**
- they DUAL: KLY,KulY,S-D **palai**, B,KY **pale**
- islander:KLY,KulY,KY-MY *kaiwalaig*, plural *kaiwaligal / kaiwalgal*, KKY *kawalaig*, plural *kawalgal*
- fish: *waapi*, plural *wapil*, KulY *wapilai*

The change of *ai* to *ei* appears to have been very common elsewhere in the dialect:

- *adaipa, adeipa*: **adhaipa** 'go/put out' attainative perfective today future
- *amaipa, ameipa*: **amayipa** 'crawl' imperfective present
- *angaipa, angeipa*: **angaipa** 'carry' perfective today future
- *batainga, bateinga*: **bathainga** 'tomorrow'
- *baidama, beidama*: **baidhama** 'shark'

One form shows optional **i** insertion:

gassumu-, gassima-: **gasama-** ~ **gasœma-** ~ **gasima-** 'catch, get', modern dialects *gasama- ~ gasœma-*

Development of *ř*

OKY had one more consonant than modern WCL, transcribed *ř*. Though the actual pronunciation of this sound and its difference from *r* was not given by any early writer, it most likely was a <u>rhotic glide</u> [ɹ], perhaps with a palatal 'hue'. The loss of this sound in the other dialects (and in modern KY) occurred in the following rules; the changes were beginning to be evident already in OKY:

Ř between like vowels or in [ə]__V deletes.

- OKY *burugo* (**bùřùga**) > modern dialects *bùg*, KLY *bùùga* 'marsh fly'
- OKY *sřinge, singe* > modern dialects *singe* 'fish/head carrying loop'
- OKY *murrag* (**mœřaaga**) > modern dialects *maag*, KLY *maaga* 'sweat, film'
- OKY *dura* (**dœřàà**) > modern dialects *daa* 'chest'

Ř sporadically becomes [+hi] when in ə__a and the following syllable is stressed.

- OKY **wœřàtha**: KY *wœyath*, KLY *wiyeth/wœyeth*, KulY *uyeth*, KKY *wath* 'year'
- OKY *norat* (**nœřàtha**): KY *nœyath/nath*, KLY *niyath*, KulY *niyath*, KKY *nath* 'platform'
- OKY *waraaba* (**wœřaba**): KY *uwiba*, KLY *wiiba*, KulY *wiiba*, KKY *waba* 'green dove'
- OKY *karrabie* (**kœřaba**): KY *kab(a)* , KLY *kab*, KulY *kœyaba*, KKY *kab* 'paddle, oar'

Ř becomes a [+V] glide when between [-hi] and [+hi] vowels, and between [+bak] and [-bak] vowels.

- OKY *mari* (**maaři**): KLY *maayi*, KKY *maay* 'pearl shell'
- OKY *sarima* (**sařima**): KLY *sayim(a)*, KKY *sayima/sayma* 'outrigger float'
- OKY *puri, prui* (**puuři**, **pœřuui**): KLY **puuyi**, KKY **puuy** 'tree, plant, magic'
- OKY *mekari* (**mekaři**): KLY *mekey*, KKY *mekay* 'almond'
- OKY *tituri* (**thithuři**): KLY *thithúúyi*, KKY *thithuy* 'star'
- OKY *Giralaga* (**Giřalaga**): KLY *Giyalaaga*, KKY *Giyalag* 'Friday Island'
- OKY *Mora* (**Muřa~Mořa**): KLY *Muwa*, KKY *Muwa~Mowa*

Vuř becomes /w/ when intervocalic.

- OKY *Maurari* (**Mauřaři**): modern dialects *Maway(i)* 'Wednesday Island'
- OKY *tura* (**thuřa~thœuřa**): modern dialects *thœwa ~ thuwa* 'shortness'

Ř optionally becomes /i/ when syllable final and following [-hi] vowels; in at least two words metathesis first occurred.

- OKY *kopar* (**kùpařa**): KY,KLY,KulY *kùpai*, KKY *kùpa* 'umbilical cord'
- OKY *kaura* (**kauřa**): KKY *kawa,* KY > **kařua* > *kawa~kaiwa*, KLY,KulY *kaiwa* 'island'
- OKY *wauri* (**wauři**): KKY *wawi,* KY,KLY,KulY > **wařua* > *waiwi* 'arm-band shell'

Ř deletes when syllable final following high vowels and non-final.

- OKY *burkera* (**buřkera**): KY *bùker* 'hot coal'

Ř disappears when followed by unstressed *i* and more than one syllable.

- OKY *ngörimuni* (**ngœřimùni**): KKY,KY *ngœimùn*, KLY,KulY *ngœlmùn* 'our EXC PL'
- OKY *myrabat* (**ngœiřabatha**): modern dialects *ngœibath* 'fathers sister'
- OKY *görigar, göriga* (**gœřigař[i]**): modern dialects *gœiga* 'sun, day'
- OKY *kariki* (**kařiki**): modern dialects *kaiki* 'here non-specific locative'
- OKY *tyariki* (**seřiki**): modern dialects *seiki* 'there non-specific locative'

Early spellings (e.g. *möaga* [məaga] 'sweat' and *neet/naat/nöat/niet* [nejat], [nat], [nəat], [nijet] 'platform' show that *ř* disappeared first, leaving a hiatus (except in those cases where *ř* > **y~i**), with reduction of [V1-V1] and [ə-V1] to [V1], and [ə-VV] to [VV].

OKY underwent the same allophony and sound changes as the modern dialects, though **z ~ dh** and **s ~ th** variation appears to have been more general in OKY, as in the following (perhaps evidence of older allophony in the language which is now levelling out):

- *zaazi* 'grass skirt': Brierly *juagee, djaajie, djaajie, dadjee, dadji, dadje, dadjie*, MacGillivray *daje*, OKY **zaazi**, **dhaazi**
- *sagul adhamadha ~ azamadha* 'be putting put on a dance!': Brierly *sagool adzamada*, OKY **sagul adhamadha ~ azamadha**
- *wœsul* 'dirty water': Brierly *ootzoo, oodthool*, OKY **uusul**, **uuthul**
- *ngœzu* 'my FEM': Brierly *udthu, oldzoo, udzoo*, MacGillivray *udzu, udz*, OKY **ngœzu, ngœdhu**

An instance of optional **r** deletion before **s** is also attested in the following example, unless the first **i** in *myaichipp* is a misprint or misreading of *myarchipp:

maayi-arsipa 'wail, keen, weep': Brierly *myaichipp*, MacGillivray *maierchipa*, OKY **mayarsipa, mayasipa**

Various forms in OKY showed <u>metathesis</u> of *ř* and **r** in the environment of **u**, **i** and **au**:

- **ngauřakai ~ ngauřakazi** > *naroka, nerawkaji* 'maiden' (unmarried girl), cf. KKY *ngawakaz*
- **gœřiga ~ gœřigař** > *gyrriegi, gurrigi, goraigor* 'day, sun', cf. KKY *gœiga*
- **puuři** > *uperia, oopeere, ooperie, uperi, prui, upiri* 'magic gear/charms/produce', cf. KKY *puuy*, KLY *puuyi*.
- *rigaboo, rugabu* (**rugœbaw**) > modern dialects *wœrugœbaw, urugœbaw*, Bœigu *wœrigœbaw, urigœbaw* 'sweet potato', lit. *wœru-gabaw* 'cord/string-cultivated yam'

Syllabification

Syllabification occurred as in the modern dialects, with the addition of *ř* also attested as a syllable final consonant. One word was recorded by Brierly and MacGillivray with a [+nas][-son] cluster, namely *enti* 'spider', however this appears to be a confusion; *enti* is probably Gudang (Australia) *ant[h]i* 'sore'.

Syllables were vowel final or end in **r**, *ř*, **l**, glide **i** or glide **u**. Otherwise surface syllable final consonants have an underlying following vowel, in which case all consonants could be syllable initial.

Orthography

There is no strict standard spelling, and three slightly different orthographies (and often mixes of them) are in use.

Mission Spelling

The Mission Spelling (established at first by <u>Loyalty Islands</u> missionaries in the 1870s, then modified by Polynesian missionaries in the 1880s): *a, b, d, e, g, i, j, k, l, m, n, ng, o, ö, p, r, s, t, u, z*, sometimes also *th, dh, dth, tr, dr, oe, ë, w, y, j*, and sometimes double vowels to show length. This spelling system was based on that used for the <u>Drehu (Lifu) language</u>, though later with the change to Polynesian mission staff, as well as the growing number of indigenous Torres Strait missionaries, the overtly Drehu forms *tr*, *dr* and *ë* were lost; these had no phonological basis in Kalaw Lagaw Ya. The mission system is used in the *Reports of the Cambridge Expedition to the Torres Strait* (Haddon et al., 1898 and on, University of Cambridge) and in *Myths and Legends of Torres Strait* (Lawrie, University of Queensland, 1971). Ray, the linguist of the Cambridge Expedition, also used various diacritics to represent short vowels and vowel quality.

Klokheid and Bani

Established in the 1970s: *a, aa, b, d* (alveolar), *dh* (dental), *e, ee, g, i, ii, k, l, m, n, ng, o, oo,oe* (/ə/), *ooe* (/ə:/), *p, r, s, t* (alveolar), *th* (dental), *u, uu, w, y, z*

Saibai, Boigu, Dauan students

Established in the late 1970s: *a*, *b*, *d* (alveolar), *dh* (dental), *e*, *g*, *i*, *k*, *l*, *m*, *n*, *ng*, *o*, *oe* (/ə/), *p*, *r*, *s*, *t* (alveolar), *th* (dental), *u*, *w*, *y*, *z* (vowel length, though it exists, is rarely represented).

People not only use these three slightly differing spelling systems, but also write words more or less as they pronounce them. Words are therefore often spelt in various ways, for example *sena/sina* 'that, there', *kothai/kothay/kothei/kothey/kothe* 'back of head, occiput'. Such variation depends on age, family, island, village and other factors such as poetic speech. It can be difficult at times to decide which is most correct — different people have different opinions (and sometimes have very strong opinions).

In general the pronunciation of older people has priority; however, some people can actually get quite offended if they think the language is written the 'wrong' way. Some insist that the mission spelling should be used, others the Bani spelling, and still others the KKY (Saibai etc.) spelling, and still again others use mixes of two or three, or adaptations thereof. Some writers of the Mabuiag-Badhu dialect (Kalaw Lagaw Ya), for example, write mainly in the Mission system, sometimes use the diagraphs *oe*, *th*, *dh* (variant *dth*) and sometimes use capital letters at the ends of words to show devoiced vowels, such as *ngukI* 'fresh water/drinking water, fruit juice' /ŋʊːki̥/. In the Bani/Klokheid orthograophy *nguki* is written *nguuki*, and in the other dialects the final vowel is either fully voiced, *nguki* /ŋʊki/), or elided, *nguk* /ŋʊk/).

The biggest bone of contention between the advocates of the 'modern' orthographies and the 'traditionalist' orthographies is the use of *w* and *y* to show the semi-vowels. In general native speakers in literacy classes seem to find *y* and *w* very difficult to learn, and that *u* and *i* are the 'logical' letters to use. Syllabification of words by untrained speakers suggests that *u* and *i* are really the underlying sounds. Thus, a word like *dhaudhai/dhawdhay* 'mainland, continent' syllabifies as *dha-u-dha-i*, not *dhau-dhai*. In songs, the glide-*u/i* can also be given full syllable status. Historical considerations also point to the semi-vowels often being vocalic rather than consonantal. Thus, *lagau*, the genitive of *laag[a]* 'place' is in underlying form <laaga+ngu>; the full form of the genitive ending *-ngu* is only retained where the nominal has a monosyllabic stem (see the section on Nominal Morphology). Similarly, verbal nouns end in *-i*, e.g. *lumai*, stem *luuma-* 'search, look for, seek, hunt'. The mid-19th century to early 20th century records of Kauaraigau Ya show that the verbal noun ending was previously *-ri* (thus *lumari*), where the *-r-* was presumably the rhotic glide rather than the rhotic tap/trill.

A dictionary now in preparation (Mitchell/Ober) uses an orthography based on detailed study of the surface and underlying phonology of the language, as well as on observation of how people write in real life situations. It is a mix of the Mission and Kalau Kawau Ya orthographies with the addition of diacritics (the letters in brackets) to aid correct pronunciation, since many of the people who will use this dictionary will not be speakers of the language:

a (á), b, d, dh, e (é), g, i (í), k, l, m, n, ng, o (ó, ò, òò), œ (œ'), r, s, t, th, u (ú, ù), w, y, z

Within this orthography, *w* and *y* are treated as consonants — this is their phonological status in the language — while *u* and *i* are used as the glides where phonological considerations show that the 'diphthong' combination has vocalic status.

The typewritten forms of *œ* and *œœ* are *oe* and *ooe*.

Pronunciation of the letters

The English pronunciations given in the list below are those of Australian English, and are only meant as a guide. The letters in square brackets ([]) are the <u>IPA</u>.

- **a** (short) [a]: 'u' as in 'hut' — *gath* 'shallow, shallows', *mathaman* 'hit, kill'
- **a**, **á** (long) (**aa** in the Bani orth.) [aː] 'a' as in *father* — *áth* 'bottom turtle shell' ('plastron'), *ma* 'spider', *lág, laaga* 'place'
- **b** [b] as in English — *Báb* 'Dad', *bibir* 'power, authority'
- **d** [d] as in English — *da* 'chest', *idi* 'oil, grease, fat, dead-calm sea'
- **dh** [d̪] similar to **d**, but with the tip of the tongue put against the top teeth- *dha* 'ladder, stairs', *adhal* 'outside', *Bádhu* 'Badu'
- **e** (short) [e] 'e' as in *bed* — *bero* 'rib, side of boat, river bank, etc.', *nge* 'then', *tete* 'animal/bird leg'
- **e**, **é** (long) (**ee** in the Bani orth.) [eː] 'are' as in *bared* — *gér* 'sea snake', *dhe* 'slime', *sei* 'there'
- **g** [g] as in English *get*, never as in *general* — *gigi* 'thunder', *gugu* 'owl'
- **i** (short) [i] short 'ee' as in *feet* — *midh* 'how', *sisi* 'gecko', *ipi* 'wife'
- **i**, **í** (long) (**ii** in the Bani orth.) [iː] 'ee' as in *feed* — *síb* 'liver, centre', *gi* 'knife', *ígil* 'life'
- **k** [k] as in English — *kikiman* 'hurry up', *kakayam* 'bird-of-paradise
- **l** [l] similar to English 'l' in *lean*, but with the tip of the tongue against the top teeth; never as in English *kneel* — *lág* 'place, home', *li* 'basket', *gúl* 'double-outrigger sailing canoe'
- **m** [m] as in English — *mám* 'love, affection', *Ama* 'Mum, Aunty', *ma* 'spider'
- **n** [n] similar to English 'n' in *nun*, but with the tip of the tongue against the top teeth — *naawu*, KKY *na* 'song', *nan* 'her, it', *nanu* 'her(s), its'
- **ng** [ŋ] as in English *sing*; never as in English *finger* — *ngai* 'I, me', *ngœrang* 'armpit'
- **o** (short) [o] more or less 'o' as is in *got*, though more rounded — *sob* 'slowness', *mogai*, Bœigu *moga*, Saibai-Dœwan *mogo* 'blank skink'
- **o** (long) (**oo** in the Bani orth.) [oː] more or less 'o' as in *god*, though more rounded — *gor* 'tie-hole', *so* 'show'
- **ò** (short) [ɔ] short version of 'oa' in *broad* — *mòdhabil* 'costs, prices', *gòyal* 'bald'

- **ò** (long) (**oo** in the Bani orth.) [ɔːˈ] 'oa' in *broad* — *mòs* 'lung, spittle', *gòy* 'baldness'
- **œ** (short) [ə] 'a' as in *about* — *bœtœm* 'lean (animals)', *bœga* 'mallard'
- **œ** (long) (**ooe** in the Bani orth.) [əːˈ] more or less like 'er' in *herd* — *wœr* 'water', *Wœy* 'Venus', *bœi* 'coming'
- **p** [p] as in English — *papi* 'noose, trap', *áp* 'garden', KKY *Pòpu* 'Grandad'
- **r** [r] similar to 'tt' in *better* when said fast (that is to say, when said as *bedder*). Before another consonant and at the end of a word, it is often trilled (like in 'stage' Scottish English or 'rr' in Spanish). In singing, however, it is normally pronounced much like the American English 'r' — *ári* 'rain, louse', *rùg* 'rag, piece of cloth', *ár* 'dawn'
- **s** [s] most commonly like English 's' in *sister*; sometimes like English 'ch' in *chew* when at the beginning of a word or in the middle of a word; never like 's' in 'as' (which is a 'z' sound) — *sas* 'style, showing off', *sisi* 'gecko', *sagul* 'game, fun, dance'
- **t** [t] as in English — *tádu* 'sand-crab', *tídan* 'return, understand', *ít* 'rock oyster'
- **th** [t̪] similar to t, but with the tip of the tongue put against the top teeth — *tha* 'crocodile tail', *thathi* 'father', *geth* 'hand'
- **u** (short) [u] short 'u' as in *lute* — *buthu* 'sand', *gulai*, KLY *gulal* 'sailing canoes'
- **u**, **ú** (long) (**uu** in the Bani orth.) [uːˈ] 'oo' in *woo* — *búzar* 'fat, blubber', *thu* 'smoke'
- **ù** [ʊ] 'u' as in *put* — *mùdh* 'shelter, haven, back-yard, camp', *kùt* 'late afternoon, early evening', *kùlai* 'first, before'
- **w** [w] not as strong as English 'w' in *we*; for most speakers of the language the only difference between **w** and short **u** is that **w** is shorter — *wa* 'yes', *kawa* 'island', *báw* 'wave'
- **y** [j] not as strong as English 'y' in *yes*; for most speakers of the language the only difference between **y** and short **i** is that **y** is much shorter — *ya* 'speech, talk, language', *aye*, KKY *aya* 'come!', *máy* 'well, spring; tears; pearl-shell, nacre'
- **z** [z] most commonly like English 'z' in *zoo*, or English 's' in *has*; sometimes like English 'j' in *jump*, or 'dg' in *budge* when at the beginning or in the middle of a word — *zázi* 'grass skirt', *za* 'thing, object', *zizi* 'crackle, crack, rustling noise'

Combinations of vowels ('diphthongs', such as *ai*, *au*, *œi*, *eu* etc.) are pronounced as written. Thus, for example, *ai* is *a-i* (basically very similar to 'i' in 'mine' with a posh accent). In singing and sometimes in slow speech, such vowel combinations can be said separately. In the Bani and Saibai (etc.) orthographies, the last elements can be written as *y* and *w* instead of *i* and *u*. The diphthongs are:

- **ei/ey** — *sei*, *sey* 'there'
- **iu/iw** — *biuni*, *biwni* 'kookoobuura, kingfisher'
- **œi/œy** — *bœi*, *bœy* 'coconut frond'
- **eu/ew** — *seu*, *sew* 'belonging to there'
- **ai/ay** — *Saibai*, *Saybay* 'Saibai'
- **œu/œw** — *kœeubu*, *kœewbu* 'battle, war'
- **òi/oy** — *òi*, *oy* 'hoy!, hey!' (reply to a call, vocative particle)
- **au/aw** — *kaub*, *kawb* 'tiredness'
- **ui/uy** — *mui*, *muy* 'fire'
- **ou/ow** — *berou*, *berow* 'of a/the rib'

Grammar

Nominal morphology

Where the morphology is concerned, the language is somewhere along the continuum between agglutinative and fusional. Nominals have the following cases: nominative, accusative, instrumental (subsumes ergative), dative (subsumes allative, purposive), ablative (subsumes elative, avoidative), specific locative, nonspecific locative (subsumes perlative and comitative) and global locative. Nominals also have the following derived forms: privative, similative, resultative and proprietive, which also forms the noun nominative-accusative plural. All stems end in a vowel or a semi-vowel, except for a few monosyllables ending in **-r** and **-l** (which includes the very few reduplicated words, like *tharthar* 'boiling, seething', as well as *ngipel* 'you DUAL' [a compound of *ngi* 'you singular' and *-pal* 'two']). For many nouns the surface nominative(-accusative) undergoes a final stem-vowel deletion rule; in the Kalaw Lagaw Ya dialect the rule results in final devoiced vowels accompanied by main vowel lengthening. There are three numbers, singular, dual and plural. Singular and dual are the same form in all nominals except the personal pronouns. Furthermore, the plural is only distinguished in the nominative-accusative — except for the personal pronouns, where the difference in number is shown by the stem.

There are two nominal classes, Common Nominals (common nouns, demonstratives, locative/temporal/etc. adverbs) and Proper Nomals (Proper names [personal names, boat names, emotive kinship terms], pronouns). The major difference between the two classes are 1) semantic — Proper nominals have pronominal characteristics, and, 2) declensional, for example Proper Nominals have one locative case rather than the three of Common Nominals.

Common Nominal declensions

Note that the following are in the Kalau Kawau Ya dialect.

Case/Suffix	Hoe/Adze	Place/Home	Knife	Water	Mud	Middle	looking	giving, getting, being, moving, doing, etc.
stem type	multisyllabic -u final	multisyllabic	monosyllabic vowel final	monosyllabic -r/-l final	monosyllabic -i glide final	locative nominal (adverb)	multisyllabic verbal noun	monosyllabic verbal noun
stem	pábu-	lága-	gi-	wœr-	sái-	dhadha-	naga+i-	má+i-
NOM-ACC SING-DUAL	pábu	lág	gi	wœr	sái	dhadh[a]	nœgai	mái
NOM-ACC PL	pabul	lagal	gilai	wœrai	saithai	dhadhal[a]	—	—
INST	pabun	lagan	ginu/gín	wœrnu/wœran	saithu	dhadhan	nœgain	main
GEN	pabu	lagau	gingu	wœrngu	saingu	dhadhau	nœgai	mai (maingu)
DAT	pabupa	lagapa	gipa	wœrpa	saipa	dhadhapa	nœgaipa	maipa
ABL	pabungu	lagangu	gingu	wœrngu	saingu	dhadhaz	nœgaile	maithaile
SP-LOC	pabunu, pabu'	laganu, laga'	gilai, ginu	wœrai, wœrnu	saithai, saithe	dhadhal, dhadha'	nœgainu	mainu
N-SP-LOC	pabuya	lagaya	giya	wœriya	saiya	dhadhaya	nœgaiya	maiya
GL-LOC	pabuyab	lagayab	gipu	wœrab, wœrpu	saiyab, saipu	dhadhayab	nœgaiya	maiya
PROP	pabul(ai)	lagal(ai)	gilai	wœrai	saithai, saithe	dhadhal(ai)[a]	nœgail(ai)	maithai
PRIV	pabugi	lagagi	gigi	wœrgi	saigi	dhadhagi[a]	nœgaigi	maigi
SIM	pabudh(a)	lagadh(a)	gidha	wœrdha/wœradh	saidh(a)	dhadhadh(a) [a]	nœgaidh(a)	maidh(a)
RES	pabuzi	lagazi	gizi	wœrzi	saizi	dhadhazi[a]	nœgaizi	maizi

a. In compounds only.

Irregular nouns

There are few irregular nouns, the most common being:

1. *ai* 'food', *ya* 'speech, language, message, etc.', *li* 'basket', *lu* 'mound, bump, hump' (instrumental *aidu*, *yadu*, *lidu*, *ludu*; specific locative/proprietive-plural *aidai/aide*, *yadai*, *lidai*, *ludai*)
2. KKY *na*, KLY *naawu*, KulY/KY *nawu* 'song'; KKY *yu* 'drying rack, cooking rack' (other dialects *nuuwa*, *nu*); specific locative/proprietive-plural KKY *nathai*, KLY/KY *nawul*, KulY *nawlai*; KKY *yuthai* (other dialects *nuwanu*, *nuwa*; *nuwal*, KulY *nuwalai*))
3. *za* 'thing, object, matter, etc.' This word has a fuller stem form, *zapu-*, which appears in certain forms: instrumental *zapun*; genitive *zapu*; proprietive-plural *zapul*. In the locative forms both stems (*za-* and *zapu-*) appear: specific locative *zanu*, *zapunu*, etc.
4. *gœiga* 'sun, day'; *bireg/bereg* 'shelf'. The stems of these words have different forms to the nominative-accusative: *gœiga* — stem: *gœigœyi-*, *gœigi-*; *bireg/bereg* — stem: *bœreigi-*, *biregi-*
5. *dœgam*, KLK *dœgaamu* 'side, direction, point of compass, aspect'. This word has two stem forms, in free variation: *dœgamu-*, *daguma-*

Demonstratives

The language has a closed class of demonstrative morphemes with special morphological characteristics:

Prefixes

- *pi-*, *pe-* 'there in the distance in a specific position'
- *kai-* 'there in the distance in a non-specific position'

Stems

- *ka-*, *kawu-/kawa-* (non-specific), *í-* (specific) 'here, this'
- *se-*, *si-*, *sewu-/sewa-* 'there, that (not too far away)'
- *-gu*, KKY *-gui*, -mulu (KKY *-ngùl* in combined forms) 'down there'
- *-ka*, *-karai/-kadai* 'up there' (variant forms of the one underlying stem)

- *-ngapa* 'there beyond', 'there on the other side'
- *-pai*, *-pa*, *-paipa* 'ahead there, up close there' (variant forms of the one underlying stem *-pai*), MY *-kupai*, KY also *-kudhai*
- *-pun[i]*, *-puwa* 'off from there, back from there, back over there, back there' (possibly variant forms of the one underlying stem)

The Kauřařaigau Ya forms recorded are the same as in the modern dialects, with the exception of *ka-/kařu-* 'non-specific here, this', *se-/si-/seřu-* 'there, that', *kařa-* 'non-specific yonder', modern dialects *kai-*, %*ka-* and *-puwai* 'ahead there', modern dialects *-pai/-pa*.

These <u>demonstratives</u> can take masculine, feminine and non-singular morphology (as such are pronominal) as well as case forms. *Í-* 'here, this' and *se/si-* 'there, that (not too far away)' take the gender/number morphemes as suffixes, and the other demonstratives take them as prefixes. Note that *ka-* 'non-specifically here' and *kai-* 'there in the distance in a non-specific position' cannot appear with the gender/number morphemes, these latter being specific. *Í-* and *se/si-* also take an <u>article</u> forming affix *-bi* to become demonstrative articles (e.g. KLY *senuubi kaazi*, KKY *senaubi kaz* 'that boy', KLY *senaabi kaazi*, KKY *senabi kaz* 'that girl', KLY *sepalab kaazi*, KKY *sepalbi kaz* 'those two children', *sethabi kœzil* 'those children'); *kedha* 'like this/that, thus' can also take this suffix (e.g. *kedhabi puy* 'such a tree').

Case/Suffix	here non specific	here specific	there non-specific	there specific
NOM-ACC	kai	in MASC, ina FEM, ipal DUAL, itha PL	sei, sí	senau MASC, sena/sina FEM, sepal/sipal DUAL, setha/sitha PL
INST	kedha	—	kedha	—
GEN	kœu, kœwau	—	seu, sewau	—
DAT	kœpa, kœwupa	—	sepa/sipa, sewupa	—
ABL	kœzi, kœwuzi	—	seizi/sizi, sewuzi	—
SP-LOC	kai, kœwa	in MASC, ina FEM, ipal DUAL, itha PL	sei, sí, sewa	senau MASC, sena/sina FEM, sepal/sipal DUAL, setha/sitha PL
N-SP-LOC	kaiki, kawuki/kœwuki	inuki MASC, inaki FEM, ipalki DUAL, ithaki PL	seiki/siki, sewuki	senauki MASC, senaki/sinaki FEM, sepalki/sipalki DUAL, sethaki/sithaki PL
SIM/GL-LOC	kedha	kedha	kedha	kedha
article	(simulative article) kedhabi	inubi MASC, inabi FEM, ipalbi DUAL, ithabi PL	(simulative article) kedhabi	senaubi MASC, senabi/sinabi FEM, sepalbi/sipalbi DUAL, sethabi/sithabi PL

The other demonstratives

Case/Suffix	gui	ka(rai)	ngapa	pai/pa	pun/pawa
NOM-ACC-INST-SP-LOC specific[a]	(pi)nugui MASC, (pi)nagui FEM, (pi)palgui DUAL, (pi)thagui PL	(pi)nuka MASC, (pi)naka FEM, (pi)palka DUAL, (pi)thaka PL	(pi)nungap MASC, (pi)nangap FEM, (pi)palngap DUAL, (pi)thangap PL	(pi)nupai MASC, (pi)napai FEM, (pi)palpai DUAL, (pi)thapai PL	(pi)nupun MASC, (pi)napun FEM, (pi)palpun DUAL, (pi)thapun PL
NOM-ACC-INST-LOC non-specific	kaigui	kaika	kaingap	kaipai/kaipaipa	kaipun, kaipawapa
DAT specific[a]	(pi)numulupa MASC, (pi)namulupa FEM, (pi)palmulupa DUAL, (pi)thamulupa PL	(pi)nukaripa MASC, (pi)nakaripa FEM, (pi)palkaripa DUAL, (pi)thakaripa PL	(pi)nungapapa MASC, (pi)nangapapa FEM, (pi)palngapapa DUAL, (pi)thangapapa PL	(pi)nupaipa MASC, (pi)napaipa FEM, (pi)palpaipa DUAL, (pi)thapaipa PL	(pi)nupawapa MASC, (pi)napawapa FEM, (pi)palpawapa DUAL, (pi)thapawapa PL
non-specific DAT	mulupa	karaipa/kadaipa	kaingapapa	(kai)paipa	(kai)pawapa
ABL	kizigui	kizika	kizingap	kizipai	kizipun
N-SP-LOC/GL-LOC neutral[a]	(pi)nuguiki MASC, (pi)naguiki FEM, (pi)palguiki DUAL, (pi)thaguiki PL	(pi)nukaki MASC, (pi)nakaki FEM, (pi)palkaki DUAL, (pi)thakaki PL	(pi)nungapaki MASC, (pi)nangapaki FEM, (pi)palngapaki DUAL, (pi)thangapaki PL	(pi)nupaiki/(pi)nupaipa MASC, (pi)napaiki/(pi)napaipa FEM, (pi)palpaiki/(pi)palpaipa DUAL, (pi)thapaiki/(pi)thapaipa PL	(pi)nupuniki/(pi)nupawapa MASC, (pi)napuniki/(pi)napawapa FEM, (pi)palpuniki/(pi)palawapa DUAL, (pi)thapuniki/(pi)thapawapa PL
N-SP/GL-LOC	kaiguiki	kaikaki	kaingapaki	kaipaiki/kaipaipa	kaipunki, kaipawapa

a. Forms without the *pi* prefix are more pronominal in function.

Pronouns

The personal pronouns are three-way nominative-ergative-accusative in declension. Note that the third person pronouns are also used as definite articles, e.g. *Nuidh garkœzin nan yipkaz imadhin* 'The man saw the woman'.

Case/Suffix	I/me	you	he/it (the)	she/it (the)	who	what
NOM	ngai	ngi	nui	na	nga	mi- (miai, miza)
ACC	ngœna	ngin	nuin	nan	ngan	mi- (miai, miza); min
INST	ngath	ngidh	nuidh	nadh	ngadh	midh (miaidu/miden/midu/midun, mizœpun)
GEN	ngau MASC, ngœzu FEM	nginu	nungu	nanu	ngœnu	mingu (miaingu, mizœngu)
DAT	ngayapa	ngibepa	nubepa	nabepa	ngabepa	mipa (miaipa, mizœpa)
ABL	ngaungu(z) MASC, ngœzungu(z) FEM	nginungu(z)	nungungu(z)	nanungu(z)	ngœnungu(z)	mingu(zi) (miaingu, mizœngu)
SP-LOC	ngaibiya	ngibiya	nubiya	nabiya	ngabiya	miaide/miainu, mizœpunu
N-SP-LOC	ngaibiya	ngibiya	nubiya	nabiya	ngabiya	miaiya, mizœpuya
GL-LOC	ngaibiya	ngibiya	nubiya	nabiya	ngabiya	miaiyab, mizœpuyab
proprietive/plural	—	—	—	—	—	midel, mizœpul
PRIV	ngaugi MASC, ngœzugi FEM	nginugi	nungugi	nanugi	ngœnugi	miaigi, mizœgi
SIM	ngaudh MASC, ngœzudh FEM	nginudh	nungudh	nanudh	ngœnudh	midh (miaidh, mizœpudh)
RES	—	—	—	—	—	miaizi, mizœzi

Dual pronouns

The dual and plural pronouns are nominative-accusative, the accusative being the same in form as the genitive, except in KKY, where the accusative is unmarked.

Case/Suffix	we DUAL	you and I	you DUAL	them DUAL (the DUAL)	who DUAL
NOM-ACC-INST	ngalbe	ngœba	ngipel	palai (Boigu pale)	ngawal
GEN	ngalben	ngœban	ngipen	palamun (Boigu palemun)	(as for singular)
DAT	ngalbelpa	ngœbalpa	ngipelpa	palamulpa (Boigu palemulpa)	(as for singular)
ABL	ngalbelngu	ngœbalngu	ngipelngu	palamulngu (Boigu palemulngu)	(as for singular)
LOC	ngalbeniya	ngœbaniya	ngipeniya	palamuniya (Boigu palemuniya)	(as for singular)
SIM	ngalbedh	ngœbadh	ngipedh	palamudh (Boigu palemudh)	(as for singular)

Ngawal 'who DUAL' is constructed from *nga* 'who' plus the clitic *-wal* 'both (dual conjunction)'.

Plural pronouns

Case/Suffix	we (exclusive)	we (inclusive)	you	they (the)	who
NOM-ACC-INST	ngœi	ngalpa	ngitha	thana	ngaya
GEN	ngœimun	ngalpan	ngithamun	thanamun	(as for singular)
DAT	ngœimulpa	ngalpalpa	ngithamulpa	thanamulpa	(as for singular)
ABL	ngœimulngu	ngalpalngu	ngithamulngu	thanamulngu	(as for singular)
LOC	ngœimuniya	ngalpaniya	ngithamuniya	thanamuniya	(as for singular)
SIM	ngœimudh	ngalpadh	ngithamudh	thanamudh	(as for singular)

Ngaya 'who many' is constructed from *nga* 'who' plus the clitic *-ya* 'and others (plural conjunction)'.

Personal names and familiar kinship terms

Familiar kinship terms are the equivalent of English kin terms such as Dad and Mum, while non-familiar terms are the equivalent of Father and Mother; these latter are treated as common nouns in the language.

Case/Suffix	Tom (mas.)	Anai (fem.)	Dad/Uncle (cf. father/uncle)	Mum/Aunty (cf. mother/aunt)
NOM-INST	Tom	Anai	Báb (thathi)	Ama (ápu)
ACC-GEN	Toman	Anaina	Baban (thathiu)	Amana (apuwau)
DAT	Tomalpa	Anailpa	Babalpa (thathipa)	Amalpa (apuwapa)
ABL	Tomalngu	Anailngu	Babalngu (thathingu)	Amalngu (apuwangu)
LOC	Tomaniya	Anainiya	Babaniya (thathiya)	Amaniya (apuwaya)
proprietive/plural	—	—	babal (thathil)	amal (apuwal)
PRIV	—	—	babagi (thathigi)	amagi (apuwagi)
SIM	Tomadh	Anaidh	babadh (thathidh)	amadh (apuwadh)
RES	—	—	babazi (thathizi)	amazi (apuwazi)

Kauřařaigau Ya nominal morphology

The earliest grammatical records of the language are those of the mid-1800s Kauřařaigau Ya dialect. This dialect is identical to the modern dialects, apart from having more archaic forms of some endings and suffixes as well as stem forms.

Nominal suffixes and endings

Common Nominals

- Nominative-Accusative: unmarked
- Ergative-Instrumental: **-n,-na,-nu,-Cu**; demonstratives unmarked
- Genitive: monosyllable stems: **-ngu**, multisyllables **-u**
- Dative-Allative: **-pa ~ -pari**
- Ablative-Causative: nouns, pronouns **-nguzi**, verbal nouns **-lai**, adverbs/demonstratives **-zi**
- Specific Locative: monosyllabic stem nouns **-lai~-dai~-thai~-ai~-řai~-rai**, multisyllabic stem nouns **-nulai~-nule~-nuli~-nul**, adverbs **-lai~-l(a)** , demonstratives **-ři**
- Non-Specific Locative: **-ya**, adverbs/demonstratives **-ki~-kidha**
- Proprietive/Plural: monosyllabic stem nouns **-lai~-dai~-thai~-ai~-řai~-rai**, multisyllabic stem nouns, adverbs **-lai** (>**-le~-li**), **-rai** (> **-re~-ri**), **-řai** (> **-ře~-ři**)
- Privative: **-gi**
- Imitative-Similative: **-dha**
- Resultative: **-zi**

Proper Nominals

No early writer recorded declined feminine forms, apart from the genitive. Ray (1907:20-21) implies (by default) that the OKY paradigm is basically the same as that of OKLY.

- Nominative-Ergative-Instrumental: unmarked
- Accusative-Genitive: masculine **-ni**, feminine **-na-**, dual-plural pronoun **-ni~-mùni**
- Dative-Allative: masculine **-nipa[ri]** , feminine ?**-napa[ri]**, dual-plural pronoun **-nipa[ri]~-mùnipa(ri)**
- Ablative-Causative: masculine **-ninguzi ~-nunguzi**, feminine ?**-nanguzi**, dual-plural pronoun **-ninguzi~-nunguzi~-mùninguzi~-mùnunguzi**
- Locative: masculine **-niya**, feminine ? **-naya**, dual-plural pronoun **-niya~-mùniya**
- Imitative-Similative: **-dha**, dual-plural pronoun **-dha~-mùdha**

Kauřařaigau Ya Pronouns

Brierly (B), MacGillivray (M) and Ray (R) recorded the following forms of the singular pronouns of OKY:

Nominative

- 1st — Brierly *gni, ngi*; Macgillivray *ngai*; Ray *ngai*
- 2nd — Macgillivray *ngi*; Ray *ngi*
- 3rd masculine — Macgillivray *nue*; Ray *nui*
- 3rd feminine — Macgillivray *na, nga*; Ray *na*
- 'who' — Brierly *gua*; Macgillivray *nga*; Ray *nga*
- 'what' — Macgillivray *[]mi*; Ray *mi-*

Accusative

- 1st — Brierly *ana*; Macgillivray *ana*; Ray *ngana*
- 2nd — Brierly *gin*; MacGillivray *ngi*; Ray *nginö, ngin*
- 3rd masculine — Brierly *nooano*; MacGillivray *nudu*; Ray *nuinö, nuin*
- 3rd feminine — Ray *nanö, nan*
- 'who' — Ray *nganö, ngan*
- 'what' — not recorded

Instrumental-Ergative

- 1st — Brierly *nath, nut*; Macgillivray *ngatu*; Ray *ngata, ngatö, ngat*
- 2nd — Brierly *needtha, needthoo*; Macgillivray *ngidu*; Ray *ngida, ngidö, ngid*
- 3rd masculine — Brierly *nooide* ; MacGillivray *nudu*; Ray *nuida, nuidö, nuid*
- 3rd feminine — Macgillivray *nadu*; Ray *nada, nadö, nad*
- 'who' — Macgillivray *ngadu*; Ray *ngada, ngadö, ngad*
- 'what' — Brierly *meedan*; Macgillivray *mida*; Ray *mida, midö, mid*

Genitive

- 1st — Brierly *ngau, gnau, ngow* masculine, *udthu, oldzoo, udzoo* feminine; Macgillivray *ngow* masculine, *udzu, udz* feminine; Ray *ngau* masculine, *ngazu, nguzu* feminine
- 2nd — Brierly *gnee, ye noo, yeenow, niu, yenoo, meeno*; MacGillivray *yinu*; Ray *nginu*
- 3rd masculine — Brierly *noonoo*; Ray *nungu*
- 3rd feminine — Macgillivray *nanue*; Ray *nanu*
- 'who' — Ray *ngunu*
- 'what' — not recorded

Based on the above forms and the modern dialects, the OKY pronouns are reconstructed as follows:

pronoun	Nominative	Accusative	Ergative-Instrumental	Genitive	Dative	Ablative	Locative
1st	ngayi	ngœna	ngathu	ngau MASC ngœzu FEM	ngaikika	ngaunguzi MASC ngœzunguzi FEM	ngaikiya
2nd	ngi	ngina	ngidhu	nginu	ngibepa[ri]	nginunguzi	ngibiya
3rd masculine	nui	nuina	nuidhu	nungu	nubepa[ri]	nungunguzi	nubiya
3rd feminine	na	nana	nadhu	nanu	nabepa[ri]	nanunguzi	nabiya
who	nga	ngana	ngadhu	ngœnu	ngabepa[ri]	ngœnunguzi	ngabiya
what	miyai	miyai	midhu	mingu	mipa[ri]	minguzi	mizapuya

The accusatives, the ablatives and imitatives underwent optional final vowel deletion, while the ergatives optionally transformed the final **u** to **a** or **œ**, or deleted it, thus **ngathu** > **ngatha** > **ngathœ** > **ngath**.

The recorded dual-plural forms are:

Nominative-Ergative-Instrumental

- 1st Dual Exclusive — MacGillivray *albei*; Ray *ngalbai*
- 1st Dual Inclusive — MacGillivray *aba*; Ray *ngaba*
- 2nd Dual — MacGillivray *ngipel*; Ray *ngipel*
- 3rd Dual — MacGillivray *pale*; Ray *palai*
- 'who' Dual — Ray *nga wal*

- 1st Plural Exclusive — Brierly *ari, churri*; MacGillivray *arri, uri*; Ray *ngöi*
- 1st Plural Inclusive — Brierly *alpa*; MacGillivray *alpa*; Ray *ngalpa*
- 2nd Plural — MacGillivray *ngi-tana*; Ray *ngita*
- 3rd Plural — MacGillivray *tana*; Ray *tana*

Accusative-Genitive

- 1st Dual Exclusive — Brierly *abonnie, abuni, abani, aboni*; MacGillivray N/A; Ray *ngalbaini*
- 1st Dual Inclusive — Brierly N/A; MacGillivray *abane, abeine*; Ray *ngabani*
- 2nd Dual — Brierly N/A; MacGillivray *ngipeine*; Ray *ngipeni*
- 3rd Dual — Brierly N/A; MacGillivray *palaman*; Ray *palamuni*

- 1st Plural Exclusive — Brierly *areen*; MacGillivray *arrien*; Ray *ngöimunu*
- 1st Plural Inclusive — Ray *ngalpanu*
- 2nd Plural — MacGillivray *ngitanaman*; Ray *ngitamunu*
- 3rd Plural — MacGillivray *tanaman*; Ray *tanamunu*

Dative

- 1st Dual Exclusive: MacGillivray *albi nipa*; Ray *ngalbainipa*
- 1st Dual Inclusive: MacGillivray *albynape*; Ray *ngabanipa*
- 2nd Dual: Ray *ngipenipa*
- 3rd Dual: MacGillivray *pale nipa*; Ray *palamunipa*

- 1st Plural Exclusive: MacGillivray *arri nipa*; Ray *ngöinipa, ngöimunipa*
- 1st Plural Inclusive: Ray *ngalpanipa, ngalpamunipa*
- 2nd Plural: Ray *ngitanipa, ngitamunipa*
- 3rd Plural: MacGillivray *tane nipa*; Ray *tananipa, tanamunipa*

Ablative

- recorded by Ray as *-[mu]nunguzi*

These can be reconstructed as:

person	Nominative-Ergative-Instrumental	Accusative-Genitive	Dative	Ablative	Locative	Imitative-Similative
1st Dual	ngalbai	ngalbaini	ngalbainipa	ngalbainingu ngalbainungu	ngalbainiya	ngalbainidha
1st-2nd Dual	ngaba	ngabani	ngabanipa	ngabaningu ngabanungu	ngabaniya	ngabanidha
2nd Dual	ngipel	ngipeni	ngipenipa	ngipeningu ngipenungu	ngipeniya	ngipenidha
3rd Dual	palai pale	palamùni	palamùnipa	palamùningu palamùnungu	palamùniya	palamùnidha
1st Plural	ngœři	ngœři(mù)ni	ngœři(mù)nipa	ngœři(mù)ningu ngœři(mù)nungu	ngœři(mù)niya	ngœři(mù)nidha
1st-2nd Plural	ngalpa	ngalpa(mù)ni	ngalpa(mù)nipa	ngalpa(mù)ningu ngalpa(mù)nungu	ngalpa(mù)niya	ngalpa(mù)nidha
2nd Plural	ngitha(na)	ngitha(na)(mù)ni	ngitha(na)(mù)nipa	ngitha(na)(mù)ningu ngitha(na)(mù)nungu	ngitha(na)(mù)niya	ngitha(na)(mù)nidha
3rd Plural	thana	thana(mù)ni	thana(mù)nipa	thana(mù)ningu thana(mù)nungu	thana(mù)niya	thana(mù)nidha

- 'Who' in the dual nominative-accusative (and optionally in the ergative-instrumental) had the forms *ngawal* (dual) and *ngaya* (plural).
- **Mi-** 'what, which' was used in much the same way as in the modern dialects.

Verb morphology

Verbs can have over 100 different <u>aspect</u>, <u>tense</u>, <u>voice</u>, <u>mood</u> and <u>number</u> forms. Verb agreement is with the object (i.e. 'ergative') in transitive clauses, and with the subject in intransitive clauses. Imperatives, on the other hand, agree with both subject and object in transitive clauses.

There are three aspects ('perfective', 'imperfective', 'habitual'), two telicity forms ('active', which focuses on the verb activity and subsumes many intransitives, many antipassives and some transitives, and 'attainative', which subsumes many transitives, some antipassives and some intransitives), two moods ('non-imperative' and 'imperative' [which resembles a subjunctive in some uses]), 6 tenses ('remote future', 'today/near future', 'present', 'today past', 'recent past', 'remote past' — KLY has developed a 7th tense, a 'last night' tense) and four numbers ('singular', 'dual', 'specific plural', 'animate active plural' — in form the animate active plural is the same as the singular, and is only found on certain verbs).

In most descriptions of the language the active and attainative forms have been mistermed transitive and intransitive respectively. Transitive, intransitive, passive, antipassive and 'antipassive passive' in the language are syntactic categories, and are formed by the interplay of nominal and verbal morphology, clause/sentence-level characteristics such as word-order, and semantic considerations.

Verb morphology consists of prefixes (aspect, positioning, etc.), suffixes (telicity, number, and two fossilised multiplicative/causative suffixes) and endings (tense, aspect and mood, and a very limited extent number and telicity). The structural matrix of the verb is as follows. Note that the two fossilised suffixes are mutually exclusive; if a suffix is in the A slot, a suffix cannot appear in the B slot, and vice versa:

(prefix) + (prefix) + stem (+FOSSILISED SUFFIX A) + (TELICITY) (+FOSSILISED SUFFIX B) + (number) + ending (+ending)

Examples:

- *pabalkabuthamadhin* 'two were laid down across something' [which would be clear in the context]
- *pabalkabuthemadhin* 'two lay down (laid themselves down) across something' [which would be clear in the context]

prefix: *pa-* 'telic prefix'

prefix: *bal-* 'positional — across'

stem: *kabutha-* 'place, lay'

telicity suffix: *-Ø* 'attainative', *-i* 'active'

number suffix: *-ma* 'dual' (absolutive agreement)

tense-aspect-mood ending: *-dhin* 'remote past perfective'

- *garwœidhamemanu* 'two met each other earlier today'

prefix: *gar-* 'collective'

stem: *wœidha-* 'place, put'

Fosslised suffix: *ma* 'intensive

telicity suffix: *i* 'active'

number suffix: *ma* 'dual'

tense-aspect-mood ending: *dhin* 'remote past perfective'

Sample verb declension

The verb here is *íma-* 'see, observe, supervise, examine, try, test'

Tensed forms

Case/Suffix	Perfective Attainative	Imperfective Attainative	Perfective Active	Imperfective Active
remote future singular	imane	imaipu (imaiparui)	imedhe	imepu (imeparui)
dual	imamane	imampu (imamparui)	imemadhe	imempu (imemparui)
plural	imamœine	imamœipu (imamœiparui)	imemœidhe	imemœipu (imemœiparui)
near future singular	imaipa	imaipu (imaiparui)	imepa	imepu (imeparui)
dual	imampa	imampu (imamparui)	imempa	imempu (imemparui)
plural	imamœipa	imamœipu (imamœiparui)	imemœipa	imemœipu (imemœiparui)
present singular	iman	imaipa	imiz	imepa
dual	imaman	imampa	imeman	imempa
plural	imamœin	imamœipa	imemœin	imemœipa
today past singular	imanu	imadha	imema	imedha
dual	imamanu	imamadha	imemanu	imemadha
plural	imamœinu	imamœidha	imemœinu	imemœidha
recent past singular	imangu	imarngu	imaingu	imairngu
dual	imamangu	imamarngu	imemangu	imemarngu
plural	imamœingu	imamœirngu	imemœingu	imemœirngu
remote past singular	imadhin	imar	imaidhin	imai
dual	imamadhin	imamar	imemadhin	imemar
plural	imamœidhin	imamœi (imamir)	imemœidhin	imemœi (imemir)

Non-tensed forms

Case/Suffix	Singular	Dual	Plural
Attainative Habitual	imaipu (imaiparui)	imampu (imamparui)	imamœipu (imamœiparui)
Active Habitual	imepu (imeparui)	imempu (imemparui)	imemœipu (imemœiparui)
Perfective Attainative Imperative (Singular Subject)	imar	imamar	imamœi (imamir)
(Non-Plural Subject)	imau (imaziu)	imamariu	imamœi (imamœiziu, imamiu)
Active Imperative	imi	imemariu	imemœi (imemœiziu, imemiu)
Imperfective Attainative Imperative	imadha	imamadha	imamœidha
Imperfective Active Imperative	imedha	imemadha	imemœidha

Nominalised forms

Case/Suffix	Verbal Noun	Proprietive	Privative	Resultative
unmarked form	imai	imail	imaigi	imaizi
independent impersonal form (NOM-ACC)	imai	imailnga	imaiginga	imaizinga
stem	imai-	imailmai-	imaigimai-	imaizimai-
independent personal form (NOM-ACC)	—	imailaig	imaigig	imaizig
stem	—	imailga-	imaigiga-	imaiziga-

Kauřařaigau Ya verbal morphology

Prefixes

These were the same as in the modern dialects.

Suffixes

The only suffix differences with the modern dialects were in the form of the plural and verbal noun suffixes. In OKY these were **maři** and **ři** respectively. The dual was **ngauma** on **ma**- 'take, give, move etc.' and otherwise **uma**.

Class 1: **wœidha**- 'put, place, cook'

- **wœidhamařinu** attainative perfective present plural object
- **wœidhaumanu** attainative perfective present dual object
- **wœidhemařinu** active perfective present plural subject

- **wœidheumanu** active perfective present dual subject
- **wœidhàři** verbal noun

Class 2: **ni**-, **niya**- 'sit, stay'

- **niyamařipa[ri]** imperfective present plural
- **niyaumapa[ri]** imperfective present dual
- **niyàři**, **niyài** verbal noun

Verb endings

ATTAINATIVE INDICATIVE	perfective	singular perfective active (where different)	imperfective
remote future	-kœrui	—	-kœrui
future	-pa[ri]	—	-kœrui
present	-nu	-izi monosyllabic stem: -iziři	-pa[ri]
today past	-nulai	-ma	-adha
recent past	-ngùl	—	-r(a)ngùl
remote past	-dhin(i)	—	-r(a)
ATTAINATIVE IMPERATIVE	-r(a) SgS, -u PlS, -riu Dual	-i	-adha

On the whole, the OKY verb seems to have been declined like the Kalau Lagau Ya verb. This includes the loss of the suffix **ma** in the intransitive imperfective present/perfective today future singular. This loss, however, appears to have been optional in the today past equivalent:[18]

- OKY *daneipa* (**danaipa**) 'rise (sun)' (MacGillivray): KLY *danaika*, KKY *danamipa* 'rise (sun, etc.), load (self) up' present imperfective
- OKY *dadeipa* (**dhœidhaipa**) 'die' (MacGillivray): KLY *dhœidhaika* (base *dhœidhama*-) 'be dizzy, dead drunk' present imperfective
- OKY *usimema, usima* (**usimima**, **usima**) 'douse' (MacGillivray): KLY *usima*, KKY *wœsimima* 'douse' today past perfective

Vowel/diphthong deletion and reduction in class 1b verbs was optional in OKY where it is now optional or obligatory:

- OKY **uzareuma-**: KLY *uzareuma*-, KKY *uzarma*- 'go dual'
- OKY *delupeipa* (**dœdupaipa**) 'drown, sink': KLY *dudupaka*, KKY *dœdupapa*

The irregular verb *yœwi*- / *iya*- / *yœuna*- 'lie/slant/lean over/down' was recorded in the form **iipa** (*eepah*), indicating the stem **ii**- (the remote past form *iir* is found in modern KY, though not recorded in OKY). Otherwise, only *yœuna*- was recorded for OKY.

Miscellaneous paradigms

Three paradigms that have irregular morphology are:

- *Si[ ]kai* 'perhaps, maybe, possibly' (all dialects except Kalau Kawau Ya). This word modifies for singular gender : masculine *sinukai/senukai*; feminine *sinakai/senakai*; general (singular, dual, plural) *sikai*. In KKY, the word is invariable *sike*, *sikedh* (*sikedh* is more emphatic.)
- *yawa* 'goodbye, farewell, take care' (cf. *yawar* 'journey, travel'; *yawaya*- 'watch over, watch out for, etc.'). This word is only used when speaking to a single person. For two or more people, the form is *yawal*.
- masculine *kame ~ kamedh*, feminine *kake ~ kakedh*, non-singular *kole ~ koledh* 'hey!' (word used to attract someone's attention; in *kamedh*, *kakedh* and *koledh* (the -dh final in all these, like in *sikedh* above, is only found in more emphatic use.)

Sign language

The Torres Strait Islanders, neighbouring Papuans and neighbouring Australians have a common sign language,[19] though early records did not make a detailed study of this (e.g. Australian Aboriginal sign languages).[20] Simple conversations and stories can be carried out in the sign language; however, it does not attain the sophistication of a fully developed sign language. It's had some influence on Far North Queensland Indigenous Sign Language.

See also

- Meriam language
- Torres Strait Creole

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